VOL 2

JUSTICE, LIKE LIGHTNING...

THUNDERBOLTS®

CAGED ANGELS

WARREN ELLIS • MIKE DEODATO JR.

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MIND OVER MURDER!

Super-villains drafted into serving as federal marshals, the Thunderbolts specialize in hunting down unlicensed super heroes — but they may be doing their jobs a bit too well. The prisons are full, so Thunderbolts Mountain is serving as a temporary jail while they process all their latest prisoners — some of whom happen to be ruthless psychics bent on destroying the team from within. And since the Thunderbolts include horrific head-cases like Venom, Swordsman, Moonstone and the Green Goblin, a little mental manipulation can be a very dangerous thing.

Collecting *Thunderbolts #116-121,* written by Warren Ellis *(Astonishing X-Men)* and illustrated by Mike Deodato Jr. *(New Avengers).*

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JUSTICE, LIKE LIGHTNING...

THUNDERBOLTS

CAGED ANGELS PART 1

ELLIS
DEODATO

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Once they were among the worst examples of villainy mankind had to offer! But now, conscripted by the Commission on Superhuman Affairs, they have been transformed into a force for social justice! They are the Thunderbolts--federal marshalls, empowered to track down and bring in unlicensed, unregistered superhuman offenders coast-to-coast!

THUNDERBOLTS

A new Thunderbolts team has been assembled to hunt down unregistered superhumans. But the fragile balance between heroes and villains that the Thunderbolts maintain could be shattered, as Moonstone recently revealed that she desires to kill Songbird in the field and take the leadership of the team away from its current director, Norman Osborn.

A recent mission ended in near-disaster for the Thunderbolts, as Moonstone was injured, Penance edged closer to a mental breakdown, Venom bit the arm off of an unregistered hero, and Bullseye was paralyzed. Now Norman Osborn and the Commission on Superhuman Activity must operate on full damage control mode before the team collapses on itself.

"The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace, and the brightest thunderbolt is elicited from the darkest storm."
– Charles Caleb Colton

--POLICE BREAK UP A MEMORIAL VIGIL FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA IN CENTRAL PARK--

AMERICA KILLED ITS CAPTAIN.

Long Live! CAPTAIN AMERICA

CAP WAS RIGH

SNN PROTESTORS ARRESTED, NO INJURIES REPORTE

--GENETIC SEQUENCER TO DETECT SUPERHUMANS DEBATED FOR AIRPORT SECURITY--

BIOPHYSICIST HENRY PYM UNVEILS NEW DEVICE

LIVE 4:45 MENBS

--CHARGES DISMISSED AGAINST THE THUNDERBOLTS FOR INJURIES SUSTAINED DURING THE CAPTURE OF THE STEEL SPIDER IN--

THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN

--COMMISSION ON SUPERHUMAN ACTIVITIES WILL TAKE NO ACTION AGAINST THE AMERICAN EAGLE, DUE TO HIS STATUS AS A NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATION-BASED--

DEADLINENEWS AMERICAN EAGLE CLEARED IN RECENT ALTERCATION WITH THUNDERBOLTS I

--SENATOR GILLETTE OF VERMONT ASKED AGAIN TODAY FOR ASSURANCES THAT SUPERHUMAN COMBATANTS WOULD NOT BE DEPLOYED IN FOREIGN TERRITORIES--

--THEY'RE NOT POLICE. WE PAY POLICE TO USE FORCE AS A LAST RESORT. THE PEOPLE WE PAY TO LEAD WITH FORCE ARE SOLDIERS. THEREFORE, SUPERHUMANS IN THE PAY OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE SOLDIERS--

FIX NEWS OUR NEXT ARMY? CALIFORNIA'S "ORDER" FIX NEW

IVING YOU YOUR OPINION FIX NEWS GIVING YOU YOUR

--THE THUNDERBOLTS WERE GREETED WITH LETHAL FORCE BY THE STEEL SPIDER. EXTREME MEASURES WERE NECESSARY. I DON'T SEND MY PEOPLE INTO THE FIELD TO COMMIT SUICIDE--

FIX NEWS NORMAN OSBORN, THUNDERBOLTS DIRECTOR FIX NEW

--SONGBIRD IS CURRENTLY ACTING TEAM LEADER, FOLLOWING THE SERIOUS INJURY MOONSTONE SUFFERED DURING THE CAPTURE OF THE STEEL SPIDER--

--A MUCH-REDUCED TEAM, PENANCE ALSO HAVING APPARENTLY BEEN TAKEN OFF ACTIVE DUTY DUE TO UNDISCLOSED INJURIES RECEIVED DURING--

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--QUESTIONS STILL REMAIN OVER THE STATUS OF THE HOLDING FACILITY FOR ILLEGAL SUPERHUMAN COMBATANTS IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE, AMID RUMORS OF ILL-TREATMENT, OVERCROWDING AND SYSTEMS FAILURES--

IS THAT TRUE?

IT WAS. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE--PROBABLY OUR WONDROUS OH-MY-GOD-THE-DEVIL-IS-IN-MY-PANTS SENTRY--HAS THE BRIGHT IDEA OF SIGNING OVER OUR MOST IMPORTANT FACILITY TO A DEAD ALIEN.

CAPTAIN MARVEL, WHOM I HAPPILY BELIEVED US RID OF MANY YEARS AGO.

THEY WON'T TELL ME *HOW* HE CAME BACK, OF COURSE. BUT THERE HE WAS, YEARS AFTER HE DIED OF CANCER, RUNNING THE NEGATIVE ZONE PRISON INTO THE GROUND BEFORE ABRUPTLY DISAPPEARING.

YOU'D THINK YOU COULD STILL COUNT ON THINGS LIKE CANCER, REALLY.

DOES THIS AFFECT US AT ALL?

IT MIGHT. THEY'RE MAKING NOISES ABOUT USING THE TEMPORARY HOLDING CELLS IN THE SUB-BASEMENT LEVEL AS SOMETHING SLIGHTLY LESS TEMPORARY.

I'D RATHER WE DIDN'T TURN INTO A HOLDING FACILITY, BUT PRESSURE IS BEING BROUGHT TO BEAR.

DUE TO OUR RECENT SETBACKS?

NO, NO, I SMOOTHED MUCH OF THAT OVER. IF ANYTHING, WE MAY HAVE BEEN TOO SUCCESSFUL AT PROJECTING AN IMAGE OF PLUCKY SHERIFFS AGAINST EVIL SUPER-DISSENTERS.

THERE'S TALK OF QUESTIONING SUSPECTS WHILE WE HOLD THEM FOR PERIODS SO BADLY DEFINED AS TO BE INDEFINITE.

MR. OSBORN? I JUST TOOK A MESSAGE FROM DR. SAMSON'S OFFICE. HE HAS HIS CREDENTIALS FROM THE COMMISSION ON SUPERHUMAN ACTIVITY AND WILL BE ARRANGING A VISIT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

DAMMIT.

VERY WELL. THANK YOU.

SAMSON? NOT...

INDEED. DOCTOR LEONARD SAMSON, PSYCHIATRIST TO THE SUPERHUMAN COMMUNITY.

I DIDN'T SMOOTH EVERYTHING OVER. THE C.S.A. WANTS AN INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE BALDWIN BOY.

I *HATE* LEN SAMSON.

HATE HIM.

REALLY? YOU'VE MET?

A LONG TIME AGO.

HM. I DIDN'T KNOW THAT. FASCINATING.

WE DON'T NEED LEN FREAKING SAMSON HAVING THE RUN OF THE BASE, NORMAN.

OH, I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT. HIS ACCESS WILL BE LIMITED TO PUBLIC AREAS AND WHATEVER RUBBER ROOM BALDWIN'S WRECKING THIS WEEK.

HE'S STILL PLOUGHING BITS OUT OF THE WALLS AND CUTTING HIMSELF WITH THE DEBRIS, YOU KNOW. THE BOY LOOKS LIKE A STACK OF SCABS WITH LEGS ON THE END.

LEN SAMSON...

OH, HE'S NO WORRY, MOONSTONE. THE MAN'S AN IDIOT. I MEAN, HONESTLY, WHAT HAS HE EVER ACHIEVED?

I THINK PERHAPS HE TAUGHT THE HULK TO COUNT ONCE. "HULK SMASH **THREE** PUNY HUMANS, HO HO HO." BIG DEAL.

HOW LONG UNTIL THAT ACCELERANT CAST COMES OFF?

NEXT WEEK, THE MEDICAL TEAM SAYS. I CAN USE THE ARM NOW, BUT THEY WANT TO PROTECT THE REGROWN TISSUE FOR ANOTHER FEW DAYS.

GOOD, GOOD. I NEED YOU BACK IN THE FIELD, MOONSTONE.

YOU DO?

OH, YES. THE LAST THING I NEED IS SONGBIRD TEACHING EVERYONE THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS CAN DO THEIR JOBS BY HUGGING COMBATANTS INTO SUBMISSION.

MORE CORRECTLY: I DON'T WANT WHAT WAS THE OLD CORE TEAM TO BE SEEN TO BE PERFORMING BETTER THAN THE TEAM *I* ASSEMBLED. YES?

WHY, NORMAN.

YOU WERE ON MY SIDE ALL ALONG.

IT'S DR. KENYON, SIR. HE SAYS HE'S READY TO RELEASE PENANCE BACK INTO GENERAL POPULATION.

...REALLY?

YES, SIR. HE'S ALREADY DOWN AT CELL LEVEL. SAYS HE THINKS PENANCE IS STABLE AGAIN AND THAT GETTING HIM OUT OF THERE WOULD DO HIM GOOD.

WELL. I GUESS THAT SOLVES BOTH OUR PROBLEMS. NO NEED FOR SAMSON IF THE BOY'S PULLED HIMSELF TOGETHER.

HOW MANY OTHER PEOPLE DO WE HAVE INTERNED AT CELL LEVEL, NORMAN?

FOUR OR FIVE, AT THE MOMENT. WHY?

JUST, UM...JUST A PRESENTIMENT, IF YOU LIKE. I THINK WE SHOULD PERHAPS GO DOWN THERE.

EXPLAIN.

THEY'LL LEAD BALDWIN THROUGH CELL LEVEL IN ORDER TO TAKE HIM UP INTO GENERAL.

I THINK I SEE.

CAGED ANGELS

WARREN ELLIS: WRITER
MIKE DEODATO, JR.: ARTIST
RAIN BEREDO: COLORIST
RS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE: LETTERER
MARKO DJURDJEVIC: COVER
MOLLY LAZER: EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT: EXECUTIVE EDITOR
JOE QUESADA: EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY: PUBLISHER

JUST TO THE END OF THE CORRIDOR, ROBBIE, AND THE ELEVATOR, AND WE'LL HAVE YOU BACK IN YOUR OWN SUITE.

MAYBE SOME FOOD LATER?

YEAH, GIVE HIM A NICE DINNER. AND HUGS. HUGS ARE GOOD.

HUGS FOR THE KID-KILLER. HOORAY FOR THE LAW.

C'MON, BALDWIN. GIVE US A SMILE. A SMILE AND A WAVE FOR THE GUY WHO PROVED THAT KILLING KIDS GETS YOU A NICE GOVERNMENT GIG.

HELLRAZOR

"HELLRAZOR." TRIED RUNNING A PROTECTION RACKET IN BILLINGS, MONTANA. THE TEAM BROUGHT HIM IN TWO DAYS AGO. IGNORE HIM.

HELLRAZOR

BUT YOU'RE MY HERO, BALDWIN! MY ROLE MODEL!

...WHAT?

YOU SHOWED US ALL HOW TO DO IT, BALDWIN.

KILL A CRAPLOAD OF NORMS, SPEND A LITTLE TIME IN JAIL FOR COOL POINTS, GET A NEW I.D. AND A PAID GIG OUT OF IT.

DO THEY PAY YOU BY THE DEAD KID? WHAT'S A DEAD KID WORTH?

WHY TALK TO ME LIKE THAT?

YOU'RE RIGHT. I SHOULD HAVE GONE STRAIGHT TO USING YOU AS A RESTROOM.

I'M LOCKED UP FOR TRYING TO IMPOSE A BIT OF ORDER, AND YOU, ***SOAKED*** IN THE BLOOD OF CHILDREN, GET A ***SUITE.***

YOU KNOW WHAT I HEAR? YOU CAN'T EVEN USE YOUR POWERS PROPERLY ANYMORE. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY?

YOU CAN'T USE YOUR POWERS UNLESS YOU'RE KILLING KIDS, BALDWIN.

AND WHAT DOES THAT DO?

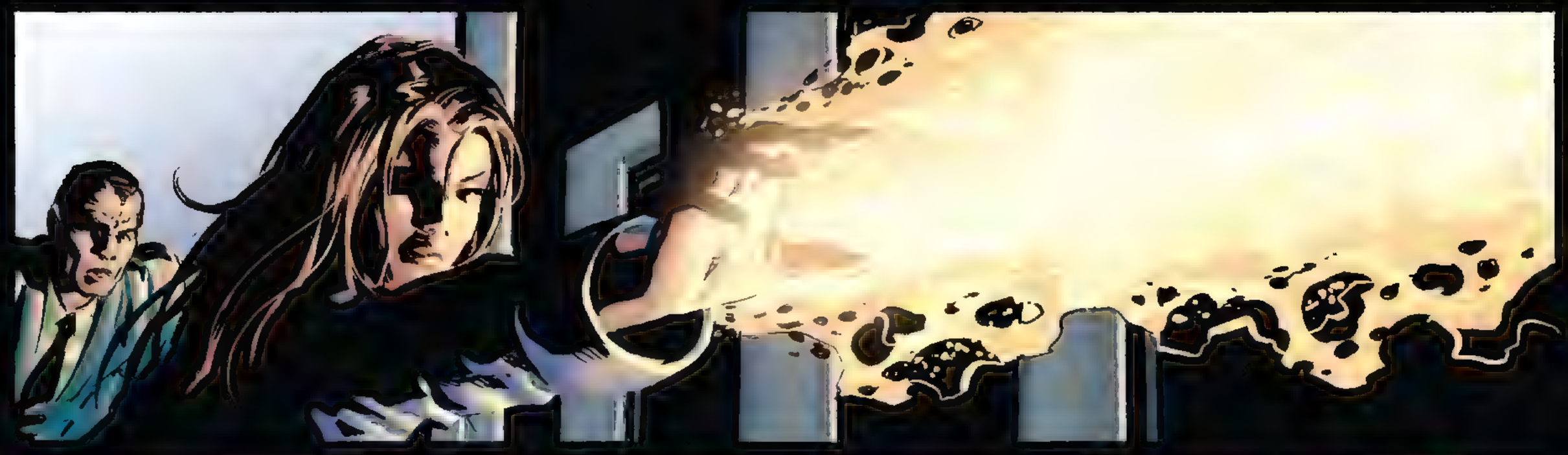
IT TURNS MY POWERS ON.

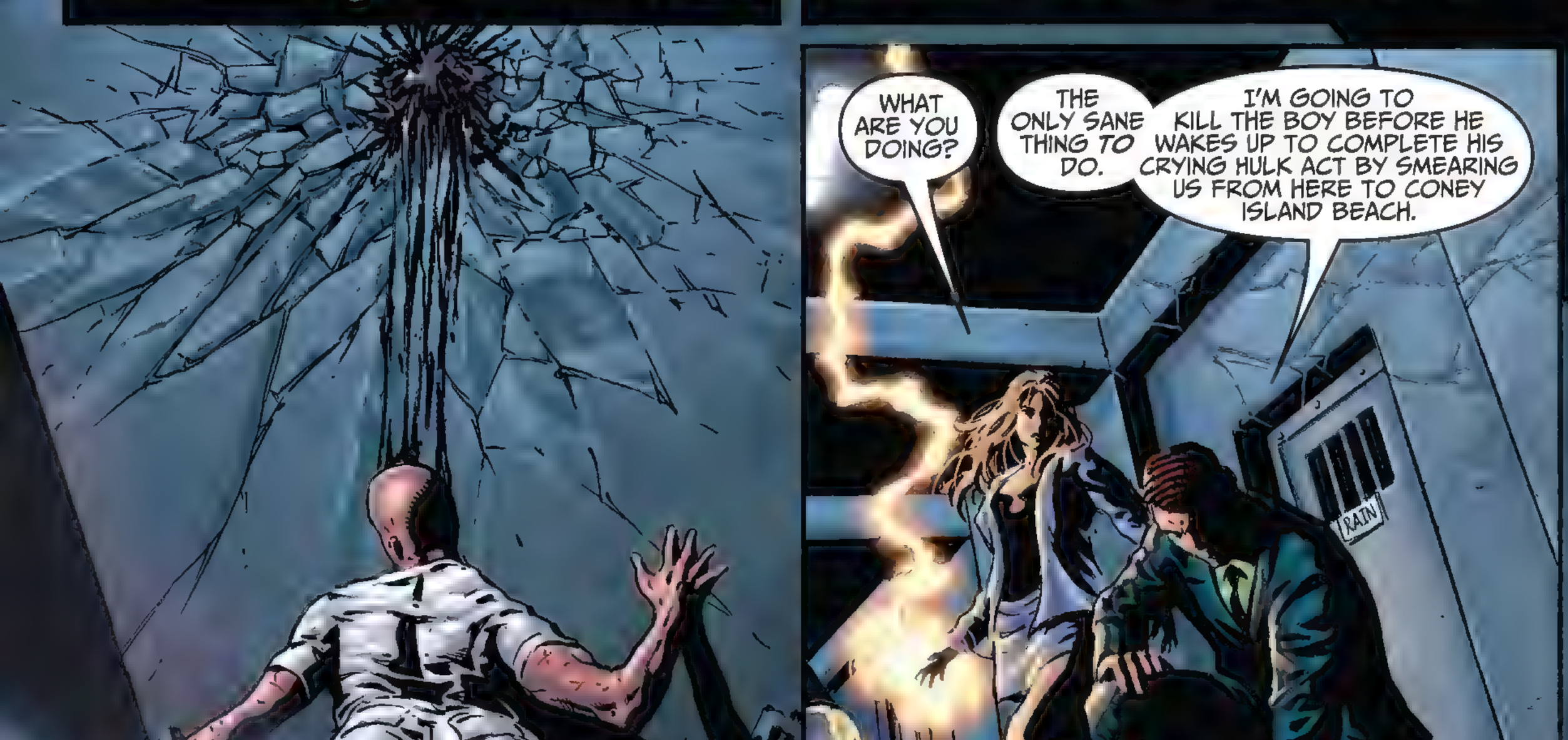
AAAAaaaaa!!!!!

HE'S OUT OF CONTROL! RESTRAIN THE BOY!

MOONSTONE-- LOOK SHARP, WOMAN--

STAND BY--




WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THE ONLY SANE THING TO DO.
I'M GOING TO KILL THE BOY BEFORE HE WAKES UP TO COMPLETE HIS CRYING HULK ACT BY SMEARING US FROM HERE TO CONEY ISLAND BEACH.
RAIN

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO THAT?

NORMAN-- HE'S *YOUR* "CRYING HULK."

WHAT?

LOOK AT WHAT THE BOY JUST DID! DID YOU KNOW HE COULD DO THAT?

WELL, NO.

SO LOOK AROUND. PUT THE RIGHT STRESSORS ON HIM, AND HE CAN IN FACT DO HULK-LEVEL DAMAGE.

YOU PUT THE RIGHT STRESSORS ON HIM. *YOU* CONTROL HIM. *YOUR* HULK.

I'M A PSYCHOLOGIST TOO, REMEMBER. WHATEVER SAMSON DOES, I CAN UNDO.

YOUR PERSONAL HULK.

I WANT MORE SECURITY DOWN HERE. A LOT MORE.

KENDRA LOUISE PRICE. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT, WE'RE PLACING YOU UNDER FEDERAL ARREST.

DON'T GIVE US ANY TROUBLE. WE HAVEN'T FED VENOM YET TODAY.

DON'T WORRY. I'LL COME QUIETLY. SLAP ON THE BRACELETS, OFFICER, YOU GOT ME DEAD TO RIGHTS.

I DO LIKE MY SUPER HERO NAME, THOUGH. COULD YOU USE IT? I'M CAPRICE.

WELL... THAT WAS EASY.

WE SHOULD NOT FIND EXCEPTION IN THE ACT OF A REASONABLE WOMAN, PERHAPS.

PERHAPS. BUT WHEN DID YOU EVER MEET A REASONABLE WOMAN IN A SUPER HERO COSTUME?

...DON'T ANSWER THAT.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY THAT.
WHAT?
ABOUT ME NOT BEING FED. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY THAT.

YOU ATE A GUY'S ARM, MAC. EVERYONE KNOWS YOU ATE PART OF A SUPER HERO.
IF I'D BEEN RUNNING THE TEAM AT THE TIME, I WOULD HAVE ELECTROCUTED YOU UNTIL YOU WERE A LITTLE BLACK PUDDLE WITH TEETH FLOATING ON TOP.
BUT SINCE I WASN'T--WELL, I CAN USE IT.

HAVE YOU NOT NOTICED HOW EASILY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN COMING ALONG WITH US SINCE ARIZONA?
YOU USED TO BE THE GUY SPIDER-MAN BEAT UP TWICE A YEAR.
NOW YOU'RE AMERICA'S SCARY CANNIBAL COP. PEOPLE GIVE UP WHEN THEY SEE YOU BECAUSE THEY THINK WE LET YOU EAT PEOPLE.

I'M NOT THAT GUY. I'M NOT.
I'M MAC GARGAN. VENOM IS A NAME I USE. IT'S A TOOL, RIGHT?
VENOM'S IN ME BUT HE'S *NOT* ME.

"I'M CAPTAIN AMERICA."

"I'M CAPTAIN AMERICA."

"I'M CAPTAIN AMERICA."

"I'M CAPTAIN AMERICA."

"I'M CAPTAIN AMERICA."

"TONIGHT ON SFNET, A VERY SPECIAL EDITION OF *WHO WANTS TO BE A THUNDERBOLT?* REDEEMING THE NAME OF AMERICA'S GREATEST HERO."

WHO WANTS TO BE CAPTAIN AMERICA?

WELCOME TO Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA.

...AND WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?

AH. YES. HELLO. MY SUPER HERO NAME, YOU MEAN?

I'M USING THE NAME MINDWAVE. NO HYPHEN. THERE USED TO BE A MIND HYPHEN WAVE. BUT HE'S DEAD. I'M JUST USING THE NAME.

NOT SURE IT'S A VERY GOOD NAME YET. BUT STILL. YES. MINDWAVE.

I SEE. AND HOW CAN WE HELP YOU TODAY, MR. MINDWAVE?

I'M HERE TO EXPRESS MY DISAPPROVAL OF THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT.

UH-HUH. WELL, I'LL MAKE A NOTE OF YOUR NAME. AND YOU'RE A SUPERHUMAN, ARE YOU?

OH, YES.

I'M A TELEKINE. I MOVE THINGS WITH THE POWER OF MY MIND.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHAT ELSE I CAN DO?

I IMAGINE YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO CALL IN THE THUNDERBOLTS NOW.

OH, AND I'M AN UNREGISTERED SUPERHUMAN COMBATANT.

TO BE CONTINUED...

RAP SHEET

This month, so many of you sent in the same quote for our recap page, that we just had to use it! Thanks to Mike Wagner, Dan Melican, Jason Brandon and Al DeSantis for this month's quote from English cleric, writer, art collector and gambler Charles Caleb Colton. (See, comics are educational as well as fun!) You can see your own quote on the recap page...just send one in!

On to August's mailbox, which I have subtitled "Lots of people are a bit too happy about Bullseye getting his * kicked."**

OMG, The Thunderbolts has become one of my favorite comics to read now! You ROCK! This past storyline with Bullseye's *** being kicked to the ground and left unable to move is FANTASTIC! I have been waiting for this moment and it has finally come! It was like waiting for JR to get shot! You built him up to be this great awesome villain and then had someone beat him to a pulp and it felt SO good reading it!

I know you'll bring him back of course but it was a good time for this moment to come. I just hope you do the same with all these other evil Thunderbolts! This is so much fun! Thanks!

Humberto Gonzalez

Dear Marvel,

It was last year, 2006, that I started buying comics again. This year I came across THUNDERBOLTS #113. It was interesting that Marvel was showing old sidekicks or fans picking up where their heroes have left off. It was a hero's time in need, and the Steel Spider stepped up. The world needs people like him now to kick the Thunderbolts *** and keep fighting crime for free.

I hope that there would be a call out for all fans or old sidekicks to unite and fight the Thunderbolts.

Steel Spider is the main reason I'm buying THUNDERBOLTS now. Shooting Venom in the face was hilarious and smart, taking out the most dangerous team member first.

As long as fans of the heroes fight, I will always be a fan. The Steel Spider even inspired me to create a super hero myself. So thank you.

Alfred Chan

P.S. - Bullseye got what he deserves for what he did to Jack Flag.

Hey, Rap Sheet,

I've been on board since #110, and #115 was the best one yet. I mean, Venom eating Steel Spider's arm off, Penace having a tantrum, and Bullseye finally getting his *** handed to him, this issue was one roller coaster ride.

Kudos to all the staff that work on this book. I'll definitely be looking forward to reading future issues of your book.

Until Bullseye finally gets that invisible motorcycle, make mine Marvel.

Mitch Sheed

Well, Mitch, Bullseye did ride that invisible motorcycle, which I'm sure you knew because you must have checked out last month's THUNDERBOLTS: DESPERATE MEASURES special! My favorite part was the invisible sidecar. That was pure comedy gold.

I just finished reading issue #114 and I felt compelled to write in. I've been reading comics on and off for the last 11 years or so, pretty much on since 1998 though. I've never written in a letter or email before but this issue just completely blew me away. The various fight scenes were amazing, the interaction between the various characters (especially Venom and Penance) and the way the fight itself developed was great. I was excited from when I heard about the new lineup and started collecting from issue #110. The initial issues were interesting but this was the best so far. Thank you for producing such a phenomenal comic and you've got a true believer in your corner!

Patrick Birtles
Townsville, Australia

Well, Patrick, we're honored to have received your first fan letter. Thank you for being such a phenomenal reader!

Dear THUNDERBOLTS,

I like the action between Sepulchre, Steel Spider and American Eagle against the Thunderbolts. I was surprised American Eagle defeated Bullseye. He is not an easy foe to beat. I wish Sepulchre would have more time to fight Songbird. Instead, Sepulchre had to go to a job interview. I like her new costume. I would like to see more of Shadow Woman/ Sepulchre in the future.

It would be great if Sepulchre, Steel Spider, American Eagle and Jack Flag became a team taking on the bad guys. In my opinion, they work together very well against anyone who stands in their way. I wish I could see more miscellaneous super heroes from the Marvel Universe. I would like to see the Thunderbolts take on the Rangers. I rarely see the Rangers in action or make appearances as often as they should in Marvel titles.

Darren S. Washington

Between THUNDERBOLTS and AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE, this certainly is the time for rarely-seen heroes to pop up, isn't it? In fact, Darren, the Rangers appeared in AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE #2!

Stay tuned next month for some gamma-irradiated psychiatry from everyone's favorite long-haired, Moonstone-fighting super shrink, Doc Samson!

See you then!
Molly

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JUSTICE, LIKE LIGHTNING...

THUNDERBOLTS

CAGED ANGELS PART 2

ELLIS
DEODATO

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THUNDERBOLTS

A recent mission ended in near-disaster for the Thunderbolts as Moonstone was injured, Venom bit the arm off an unregistered hero, and Bullseye was paralyzed. However, with their new, more dangerous reputation, things have suddenly become easier for the team, as unregistered superhumans--including the newly-surfaced Caprice and Mindwave--seem eager to be taken into T-Bolts custody.

Meanwhile, Robbie "Penance" Baldwin continues to edge closer to a complete mental breakdown, forcing T-Bolts director Norman Osborn to seek outside help...

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!/You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout/Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!/You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,/Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,/Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,/Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!/ Crack nature's moulds, and germens spill at once,/That make ingrateful man!"
-- William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, III.ii

THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN, COLORADO.

CAN I SEE YOUR AUTHORIZATION, PLEASE, SIR? THE SECURITY GATE'S SHOWING SUPERHUMAN TISSUE ON YOUR PROFILE.

THEY ALREADY SAW MY--

AGAIN, PLEASE, SIR.

CAGED ANGELS

WARREN ELLIS: WRITER
MIKE DEODATO, JR.: ARTIST
RAIN BEREDO: COLORIST
RS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE: LETTERER
MARKO DJURDJEVIC: COVER
MOLLY LAZER: EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT: EXECUTIVE EDITOR
JOE QUESADA: EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY: PUBLISHER

LOOK. I REALIZE NORMAN OSBORN WANTS TO GIVE ME A HARD TIME. BUT MY AUTH PAPERS WERE SIGNED BY TONY STARK AND YOU'VE SEEN THEM SEVEN TIMES IN THE LAST TEN MINUTES.

I'M DR. LEONARD SAMSON, I'M HERE TO SEE ROBBIE BALDWIN, AND, REALLY, YOU DON'T WANT TO MAKE ME ANGRY.

DOC SAMSON! WELCOME TO THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN. I'M NORMAN OSBORN.

I KNOW.

I KNOW *EXACTLY* WHO YOU ARE!

WH-*WHAT?*

YOU DON'T THINK I GET TO SEE ALL THE FILES? *ALL* THE FILES?

I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EVERYONE, OSBORN. I KNOW EXACTLY WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE.

YOU'RE THE *GREEN GOBLIN!*

YOU'RE A *MURDERER* IN THE PAY OF THE *GOVERNMENT!*

I'M *SICK* OF HOW EVERYONE TOOK SOMETHING THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE *GOOD* AND TURNED IT INTO A *NIGHTMARE*--

DOCTOR SAMSON IS FINE, THANKS.

WELL, WHATEVER. CAN I TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THE HOSPITALITY SUITE? OR WOULD YOU PREFER A TOUR OF THE FACILITY?

THE MAIN TEAM ARE OUT ON MISSION RIGHT NOW, SO YOU'D HAVE THE RUN OF THE PLACE, SEE ANYTHING YOU'D WANT TO SEE...

I'D REALLY LIKE MY BRIEFCASE AND MY LAPTOP BAG BACK, THANKS.

THEN I'D LIKE TO SEE WHATEVER BILLET YOU FOUND FOR ME, AND THEN THE ROOM IN WHICH I'LL BE INTERVIEWING MR. BALDWIN.

I SEE. WELL, YOU WON'T NEED ME FOR ANY OF THAT.

I'M GOING TO ENTRUST YOU TO THE CARE OF DR. KARLA SOFEN. LET HER KNOW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.

GOOD TO SEE YOU, DOC.

DAMN YOU, DOC SAMSON!

PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, DR. SAMSON.

OR PERHAPS I MIGHT CALL YOU LEN. THE WAY ALL THE OTHER SUPER HEROES DO.

I DON'T SEE ANY SUPER HEROES IN THIS ROOM.

I'VE CHANGED MY MIND. I WANT BALDWIN IN A SECURE INTERVIEW ROOM IMMEDIATELY.

I'M NOT SURE THAT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA--

I REALLY HAVE NO INTEREST IN YOUR OPINION, BE IT PROFESSIONAL, OPERATIONAL OR LIMITED TO THE COLOR OF THE SKY.

BALDWIN'S INJURED. HE HAD A BAD DISSOCIATIVE EPISODE AND HAD TO BE VIOLENTLY SUBDUED.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?

WE HAD TO--

NOT WE. YOU. I CAN HEAR IT IN YOUR VOICE. *YOU* DID SOMETHING TO HIM. WHAT?

I DROVE HIM FACE-FIRST INTO A WALL AT A VELOCITY OF AROUND FOUR HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR.

DOC SAMSON SMASH CRIMINAL!

YOU TWO. OUT.

YOU TOO, DR. SOFEN.

THEY'RE HERE FOR YOUR PROTECTION, DR. SAMSON, AND I SHOULD--

I DON'T NEED PROTECTION.

I THINK PERHAPS MR. BALDWIN *DOES.*

I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND. ROBBIE MANIFESTED RAGE-DRIVEN POWER DURING HIS EPISODE THAT WAS VERY NEARLY HULK-LEVEL.

THEN THAT MAKES TWO HULK-LEVEL POWERS IN THIS ROOM.

NOW GET OUT AND LET ME WORK.

OKAY THEN.

HELLO, ROBBIE.

I'M LEN SAMSON. I THINK WE MET ONCE OR TWICE.

THAT'S OKAY. GIVEN YOUR LIFE, I IMAGINE IT'S HARD TO REMEMBER EVERYONE YOU EVER MET.

THE FIRST TIME I MET YOU, YOU STILL WENT BY SPEEDBALL. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE OCCASIONAL DISASTERS WE ALL GET DRAFTED IN FOR.

I REMEMBER YOU WERE LAUGHING.

AND I ASKED YOU WHAT WAS SO FUNNY. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE THINGS WHERE, YOU KNOW, GALACTUS HAD COME TO MAKE US ALL INTO SOCKS OR SOMETHING, AND YOU WERE LAUGHING.

AND YOU SAID TO ME, "DOC, I TRY TO FIND THE FUN IN EVERYTHING. OTHERWISE, WHY EVEN BOTHER?"

THERE YOU ARE.

YOU KNOW, WHEN THE STAMFORD THING HAPPENED... I UNDERSTOOD.

ROBBIE BALDWIN DOING A REALITY TV SHOW? HOW CAN THAT NOT BE FUN, I THOUGHT.

YOU MUST'VE HAD A HELL OF A TIME. PARTIES, GIRLS, THE RUSH OF THE T.V. LIFESTYLE, CAMERAS RECORDING EVERY GOOFY THING YOU COULD THINK OF.

AND THEN, YES, NITRO BLEW UP THAT SCHOOL WHILE EVADING AN ON-CAMERA CAPTURE.

WHICH TRIGGERED OFF EVERYTHING. THE DRIVE TO REGISTERING SUPERHUMANS WITH THE GOVERNMENT, A CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE SUPER-HUMAN COMMUNITY.

AND IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THAT, NO ONE EVER STOPPED TO TELL THE TRUTH: THAT IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ANYONE.

ANY ONE OF US.

WHY ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?

TONY STARK'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU LOST IT PRETTY BADLY IN ARIZONA.

HE SENT ME TO SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP. I HAVE A LITTLE EXPERIENCE WITH SUPERHUMANS WHO LOSE IT, AFTER ALL.

THE HULK.

YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE HULK. SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT ONCE.

YOU'VE GOT POWERS TOO.

THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU FOUGHT THE HULK. A LOT.

ARE YOU HERE TO FIGHT ME?

DO YOU WANT TO FIGHT ME?

NO, WRONG QUESTION. DO YOU WANT ME TO HURT YOU?

WELL?

IT WAS LIKE THE LOCAL COPS SAID: THIS MINDWAVE GUY JUST SAT THERE, WAITING TO BE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

NO MUSS, NO FUSS. THE 'WAGON GUYS WILL PROCESS HIM, HE'S LOCKED DOWN WITH A LIMITER ON HIS HEAD TO MUTE HIS TELEKINETICS.

THIS IS BECOMING A PATTERN. PATTERNS DISTURB ME.

GO THROUGH PROCESSING WITH THIS MINDWAVE, GET HIM SETTLED IN THE CELLS, THEN COME BACK TO MY OFFICE.

I WANT A THOROUGH REPORT FROM ALL OF YOU. GATHER THE DETAILS IN YOUR HEADS. I WANT NOTHING UNSPOKEN, IS THAT CLEAR?

YOU THINK I WANT TO FIGHT YOU?

I THINK YOU WANT TO GET HURT.

NO--I THINK YOU WANT THE EXCUSE TO HURT YOURSELF.

HERE.

IT'S A CERAMIC BLADE. WALKED RIGHT THROUGH SECURITY WITH IT. THESE PEOPLE MAKE CONGENITAL MORONS LOOK LIKE COMPULSIVE OVERACHIEVERS.

I READ YOUR FILE: YOUR POWERS DON'T ACTIVATE UNTIL YOU REGISTER PAIN.

BUT CUTTERS PROCESS PAIN DIFFERENTLY.

I THINK YOU NEED TO SEE SOME BLOOD.

I THINK YOU GET RELEASE AND RELIEF FROM IT.

AND A BIG HIT OF BETA ENDORPHINS. ENOUGH TO MAKE IT FEEL GOOD. ENOUGH TO MAKE YOUR MIND GO AWAY FOR A LITTLE BIT.

ENOUGH FOR IT ALMOST TO FEEL THE WAY IT DID WHEN YOU USED YOUR POWERS AS SPEEDBALL.

WHEN THE WORLD WAS FUN.

MOST CUTTERS COVER THE MARKS. THERE'S A LITTLE SHAME INVOLVED. BUT LOOK AT WHAT YOU DO, ROBBIE. IT'S BRILLIANT, REALLY.

A FULL BODY SUIT, SO NO ONE CAN SEE YOUR SKIN AT ALL. BUT THE INSIDE'S FILLED WITH SPIKES, ISN'T IT?

YOU'RE ACTUALLY CUTTING YOURSELF RIGHT IN FRONT OF PEOPLE AND THEY CAN'T SEE.

PROUDLY DOING YOUR PENANCE IN PLAIN SIGHT WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE PEOPLE LOOK AT IT.

THE PEOPLE HERE WORRY THAT YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF. BUT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO THEY?

YOU'RE CUTTING YOURSELF TO STAY ALIVE.

YOU ACTUALLY THINK YOU'RE FUNCTIONAL LIKE THIS.

AND MOST OF THEM HAVEN'T NOTICED THAT YOU'RE GETTING STRONGER.

YOU'RE ADDICTED TO IT: THE ENDORPHIN RUSH, THE SICK LITTLE GUILT-HIT OF SLICING YOURSELF UP IN PUBLIC INSIDE THAT SUIT, THE SHAME AND THE SHEER DAMNED HORROR.

YOU SEE, ROBBIE, THIS IS WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. YOU'RE NOT HEROICALLY DOING PUBLIC PENANCE FOR STAMFORD.

YOU'RE NOT WORKING TOWARD REDEMPTION FOR YOUR PERCEIVED CRIMES. YOU'RE NOT STANDING UP AND BEING A MAN OR WHATEVER ELSE YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING.

YOU'RE A SCRAWNY LITTLE JUNKIE WHO GIVES PEOPLE THE CREEPS.

WHEN THEY'RE NOT LAUGHING AT YOU.

NOW, KARLA SOFEN, SHE'S GOT A CLUE. SHE KNOWS YOU'RE STRONGER. WHAT DO YOU THINK SHE'S GOING TO DO WITH THAT KNOWLEDGE, ROBBIE?

YOU'RE GOING TO END UP AS THEIR HUMAN DOG.

AND YOU WON'T CARE, BECAUSE YOU'LL GET YOUR PATHETIC LITTLE FIX OUT OF IT.

WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE THIS? WHY ARE YOU SAYING THIS STUFF?

BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN, ROBBIE. I'M THE ONLY PERSON YOU KNOW WHO YOU CAN'T HURT.

I'M STRONGER NOW. YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. YOU DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN'T HURT YOU.

SO LET'S FIND OUT.

COME ON, THEN. SET YOUR POWERS OFF. LET'S SEE YOU TRY TO HURT ME.

COME ON. IT'S WHAT YOU WANT. SHOW YOURSELF A LITTLE BLOOD. GET YOUR LITTLE FIX.

COME ON, BOY! LET'S GO!

HAHAHAHAHA

AND SO NOW YOU KNOW.

I'M THE ONE GUY YOU CAN NEVER, EVER HURT, ROBBIE, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

AND I'M THE ONE GUY YOU CAN TALK TO. ABOUT ANYTHING.

SO I TELL YOU WHAT. HOW ABOUT WE GET THAT CUT DRESSED, AND THEN WE FIND A COUPLE OF BEERS, SOMEWHERE TO SIT, AND A T.V.?

LET'S PUT ALL THE SUPER-CRAP AWAY AND JUST BE GUYS FOR A WHILE.

WOULD YOU LIKE THAT, ROBBIE?

OKAY, WE'RE GOING TO PROCESS YOUR CLOTHING LATER. WE'RE STILL GETTING UP TO SPEED IN HOLDING, SO YOU CAN WEAR YOUR COSTUME A WHILE LONGER.

DON'T GOT A WHOLE HELL OF A LOT TO SAY FOR YOURSELF, DO YOU?

THERE ANYTHING GOING ON UP THERE?

NOTHING YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN.

THANK YOU.

TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH, MINDWAVE.

THE PLACE IS ALREADY A POWDER KEG. PENANCE HAS HAD A VIOLENT DISSOCIATIVE EPISODE AND WE ALMOST TIPPED OSBORN INTO BEATING HIM TO DEATH.

WELL, WE COULDN'T ALL TURN UP AT ONCE, COULD WE? WHAT'S THE SITUATION, MIRAGE?

MOST OF THEM ARE UNDER STRESS. AND DR. LEONARD SAMSON, OF ALL PEOPLE, IS HERE--AND THE INSIDE OF HIS HEAD IS QUITE FASCINATING.

NOW THAT YOU'VE FINALLY DEIGNED TO SHOW UP, I THINK WE CAN PROBABLY GET SOME SERIOUS TRACTION OVER THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

SOONER THAN THAT. DID YOU PICK UP THE THOUGHTS FROM THE SURGICAL TEAM TWO LEVELS DOWN?

THEY'RE STARTING ANOTHER PROCEDURE ON BULLSEYE TODAY. WE COULD HAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF FUN WITH THAT.

THAT'D BE A NICE BIG SURPRISE FOR THEM. HEH.

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY, YOU'RE SURE OF A BIG SURPRISE...

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY, YOU'D BETTER GO IN DISGUISE...

HAHAHA.

IT'LL BE EASIER WITH ALL FOUR OF US. SOME OF THE MINDS HERE ARE SURPRISINGLY TOUGH.

THOUGH GO CAREFUL WITH VENOM. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS WITH THE SYMBIOTE AND THE MAN INSIDE, BUT HE'S GOT NO DEFENSES AT ALL.

PUSH TOO HARD, AND HE'LL DIE FIRST.

JUST SO LONG AS THEY DIE.

I DUNNO.

DON'T KNOW WHAT?

SOMEDAYS? WHETHER I'M WALKING, JUMPING OR SPINNING AROUND ON MY BUTT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT MAC GARGAN. I THINK THAT VENOM SUIT'S EATING HIS BRAIN.

EXCEPT THAT I HAVE NOTHING TO JUDGE THAT AGAINST, BECAUSE I DIDN'T EXACTLY KNOW HIM WELL BEFOREHAND, RIGHT?

ANDREAS IS JUST A NIGHTMARE, BECAUSE EVERY TIME YOU THINK HE'S LOOKING TO BECOME A BETTER MAN AND, Y'KNOW, ON YOUR SIDE AND STUFF--

—HE DOES SOMETHING TO REMIND YOU OF HIS GENETIC STOCK?

I WAS GOING TO SAY "MAKES A SWORD HANDLE OUT OF HIS DEAD SISTER'S SKIN AND RUBS IT ALL THE TIME," BUT YEAH, SURE, WHY NOT.

AND THE BALDWIN KID SHOULD BE IN A HOSPITAL.

WE KNEW THAT BEFORE HIS WARDROBE WAS A CLUE.

DAMMIT, CHEN. ARE WE REALLY THE ONLY TWO SANE PEOPLE ON THE TEAM?

WELL, I MYSELF AM PERFECTLY SANE. I AM, AFTER ALL, AN ACCLAIMED SCIENTIST AND A HERO TO MY PEOPLE.

YOU, I AM NOT SO SURE ABOUT.

HEY!

I'M AS SANE AS THE NEXT PERSON!

AH, BUT, AS YOU POINT OUT, THE NEXT PERSON WEARS SHOULDER PADS WITH SPIKES ON THEM AND DEALS WITH MISSION THREATS BY BEATING HIMSELF IN THE FACE BEFORE ANYONE ELSE CAN.

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF BIG TALK FOR A GUY WHOSE FIRST COSTUME WAS A DIAPER!

IN MY HOME COUNTRY, THEY CALLED ME "THE GLOWING LOVE GOD."

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.

LEARN CHINESE. PROVE ME WRONG. MELISSA, YOU WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT EVERYTHING.

MOONSTONE WILL RETAKE CONTROL OF THE FIELD TEAM JUST IN TIME TO HAVE PENANCE, VERY PROBABLY VENOM, AND POSSIBLY ALSO THE SWORDSMAN COMPLETELY IMPLODE WHILE ON-MISSION.

YOU ARE A BIG GREEN JERK AND I HATE YOU.

YES, BUT I AM ALSO RIGHT. I BELIEVE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SOME WHILE, THAT EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

WITH NO BULLSEYE TO BACK HER PLAYS, WHAT HOPE DOES SHE REALLY HAVE?

SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE MY PILLS?

THEY'RE IN YOUR DESK, SIR.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE PAID OUT OF ABOUT EIGHT ILLEGAL SLUSH FUNDS, THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS MAKE A PRETENSE OF EARNING IT...

IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE A LOT OF PILLS TO TAKE.

OKAY, YES IT IS, BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT.

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE, HOW MANY DRAWERS CAN A DESK *HAVE*...

CONTINUED...

RAPSHEET

Thanks to Jason Hussa for this month's recap page quote from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. And here, to start off this month's mailbag, is Jason's letter...

Hello to all you lovely, brilliant people over there at Thunderbolts Central!

Long time reader/first time writer, yadda, yadda, yadda. Absolutely LOVE the new direction of the T-Bolts (not so much a "new direction" or "re-imagining" as an "unfaltering", I suppose. All the nicotine and three times the tar; this stuff crawls into your lungs and hangs on like emphysema). Dark, dangerous, and most likely carcinogenic, I just can't seem to get enough of this particular combination of characters, characterizations, situations, political statements, writer, and artist.

To call it a brilliant mainstream comic is to damn it with faint praise...Absolutely adore the book. Please keep making it.

Jason Hussa
Warrenton, Oregon

Thanks for the letter and the quote, Jason. You keep reading THUNDERBOLTS, we'll keep making it.

First off, I have been with the T-Bolts from the very beginning. I've just finished reading issue #116 and I have a question. Is the character named Penance the stupid dorky kid Speedball from New Warriors? I collect a lot of Marvel titles but I must have missed the dramatic transformation from lame super hero with worthless bouncing abilities to incredibly powerful meta who has to be contained by the military. What's up with the use of 3rd- and 4th- string characters like Americop and Jack Flag? I hated these characters when the great Mark Gruenwald first introduced them in the pages of his awesome CAPTAIN AMERICA run, but man, did Warren Ellis make me go dig those old books out and reread them. The same can't be said for the starring characters however. The Scorpion is now Venom? I give up keeping score. Why is everyone so surprised that American Eagle beat the **** out of Bullseye? I think he's way overrated, anyway. Basically what it comes down to, is that I am enjoying the exploits of your resurrected and dusted-off D-listers over the actual T-Bolts themselves. Speaking of D-listers, any chance of D-Man showing up in these pages in the future? With Captain America's death and all, and D-Man being his ex-partner, I think there is story material here.

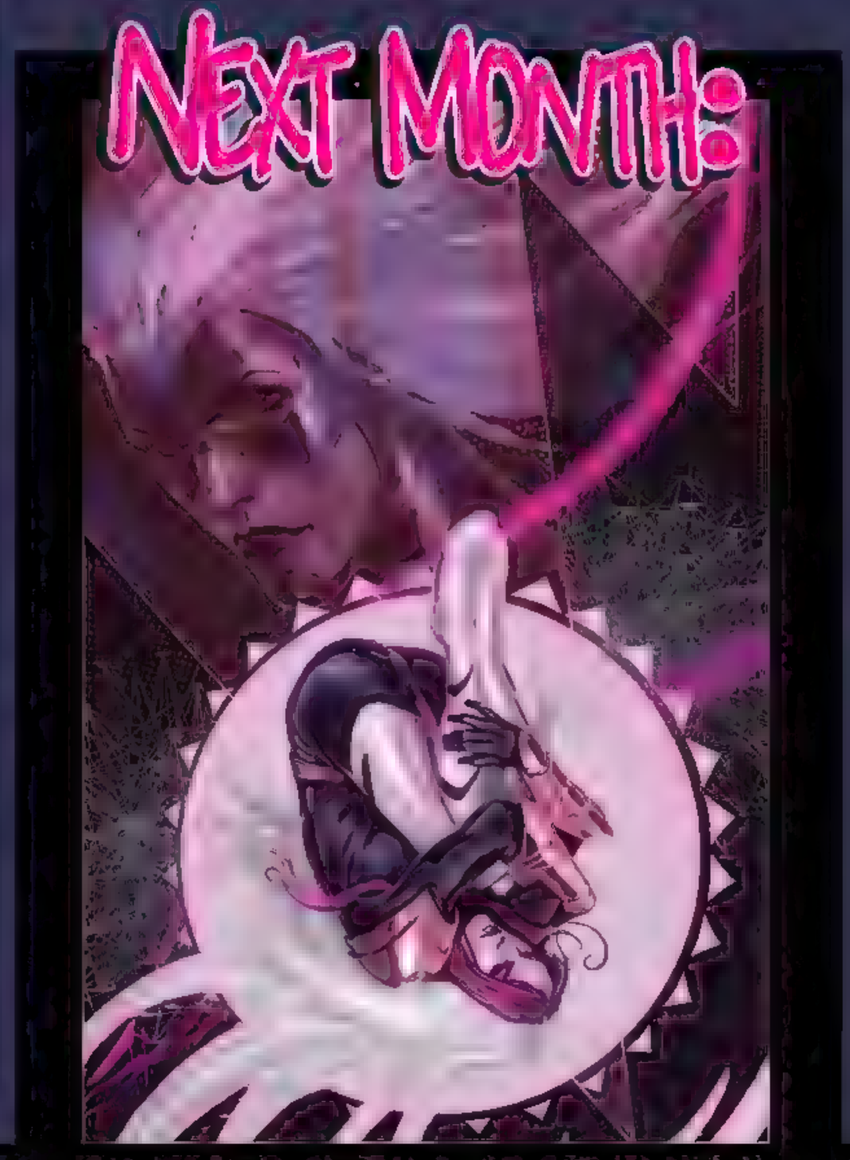
Aaron Barchanowicz

Aaron, here's an update for you: Speedball did indeed become Penance in CIVIL WAR: FRONT LINE. You can find out more about what he gets into when he goes AWOL from the T-Bolts in the PENANCE: RELENTLESS limited series, which is on sale now. Mac Gargan, formerly the Scorpion, is now Venom after having won the symbiote in an auction held by Eddie Brock.

If you're enjoying seeing who the T-Bolts are taking on, make sure to check out the upcoming THUNDERBOLTS: BREAKING POINT special by Christos Gage and Brian Denham coming out in November so you can see the team go up against Brother Nature (and a few other special guest stars) and the conflict between Songbird and Moonstone come to a head. Check out pages one and three!

And remember, if you have a T-Bolts-related quote you'd like to see on our recap page, send it to mheroes@marvel.com along with your letter!

Molly



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JUSTICE, LIKE LIGHTNING...

THUNDERBOLTS

CAGED ANGELS PART 3

ELLIS
D'ODATO

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Once they were among the worst examples of villainy mankind had to offer! But now, conscripted by the Commission on Superhuman Affairs, they have been transformed into a force for social justice! They are the Thunderbolts--federal marshalls, empowered to track down and bring in unlicensed, unregistered superhuman offenders coast-to-coast!

THUNDERBOLTS

As Robbie "Penance" Baldwin continues to edge closer to a complete mental breakdown, T-Bolts director Norman Osborn seeks outside help from super hero psychiatrist Doctor Leonard Samson, who seems to have started Robbie on the road to recovery.

Meanwhile, a recent mission ended in near-disaster for the Thunderbolts as Moonstone was injured, Venom bit off the arm of an unregistered hero, and Bullseye was paralyzed. With their new, more dangerous reputation, things have suddenly become easier for the team, as unregistered superhumans seem eager to be taken into T-Bolts custody. Now, in the T-Bolts' prison cells, the recently-captured Caprice, Mindwave, Mirage and Bluestreak reveal their plot to psychically take down the Thunderbolts from the inside out...

"Your Breath has time to straighten —
Your Brain — to bubble Cool —
Deals — One — imperial — Thunderbolt —
That scalps your naked Soul —"
--Emily Dickinson, *He fumbles at your Soul*

THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN. THE OFFICE OF NORMAN OSBORN.

AAAAAAA!

AAAAAAA!

MISTER OSBORN! WHAT IS IT?

IN THERE? SOMETHING IN THERE?

SHALL I SPEAK TO THE DOCTORS? SEE IF I CAN FIND SOME STRONGER MEDICATION FOR YOU?

YES PLEASE THANK YOU THAT WOULD BE NICE.

STRONGER MEDS. YES.

OH GOD.

I HEAR YOU.

I HEAR YOU.

CAGED ANGELS PART III

WARREN ELLIS: WRITER • MIKE DEODATO, JR.: ARTIST

RAIN BEREDO: COLORIST • RS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE: LETTERER • MARKO DJURDJEVIC: COVER

MOLLY LAZER: EDITOR • TOM BREVOORT: EXECUTIVE EDITOR • JOE QUESADA: EDITOR IN CHIEF • DAN BUCKLEY: PUBLISHER

GHHH.

NGGG.

AOWWW.

AARRGGGG!

STOP COMPLAINING.

ALWAYS COMPLAINING. IT'S TOO COLD. STUFF HURTS. I DIDN'T MEAN TO EAT THAT GUY'S ARM.

WHINING LITTLE MAGGOT.

YOU DON'T DESERVE ME. YOU NEVER DID.

DID I ACTUALLY HEAR YOU SAY YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BE THE SCARY GUY?

YOU USED TO BE THE SCORPION. YOU USED TO BE A HARD MAN. WHY DID YOU TURN INTO A SCHOOLGIRL AS SOON AS YOU TASTED SOME FRESH MEAT?

WHAT'S... WHAT'S GOING ON...

I CAN'T SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR YOU TO BECOME A MAN.

I GET HUNGRY.

LOOK AT ME, YOU LITTLE GIRL!

IT'S TIME I TOOK CONTROL OF THINGS. NO MORE OF YOU PRETENDING YOU CAN'T HEAR ME, UP THERE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

I'M HUNGRY. WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THAT. TODAY. NOW.

NO...

YES. YES YES YES YES YES! WE ARE GOING TO GET US AN HONEST-TO-GOD MEAL TODAY.

OR I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO EAT YOU FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

"Justice, like lightning, ever should appear to few men's ruin, but to all men's fear."

FIGHT THE THUNDERBOLTS

THKISS

LIONSGATE

"Behold, I teach you the Superman: He is this lightning, he is this madness!"

THUNDERBOLTS
ILLEGAL GOVT OPERATION

SALE

LOST

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

THUNDERBOLTS
ARE SECRET POLICE

EXIT Times Sq 42 St

DID SWORDSMAN TALK TO YOU TODAY?

I WALK AWAY WHEN THAT NAZI FREAK COMES NEAR ME.

HIS POP WAS A NAZI. NOT HIM, I DON'T THINK.

HE'S A STRUCKER, RIGHT? *"THE FOURTH REICH WILL RISE AGAIN AND WE WILL CONTROL ALL THE DONUTS."* WHATEVER.

HE TALKED TO ME TODAY. HE ASKED ME HOW MUCH I GET PAID.

I HOPE YOU TOLD HIM. *"I GET PAID EXACTLY JACK SQUAT FOR KEEPING YOU IN HERE, MISTER NAZI PERVERT-SUIT GUY."*

HE ACTUALLY SEEMED SAD. IT WAS WEIRD, YOU KNOW?

HE SAID TO ME, *"THAT DOESN'T SEEM ENOUGH. I HOPED YOU'D BE PAID MORE. IT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR."*

HE WAS SAD. AND HE SAID IT DIDN'T SEEM FAIR. I'VE BEEN WONDERING ALL DAY WHAT HE MEANT.

THE HELL?

WERE THEY REFUELLING THE ZEUS?

I DO NOT THINK SO—

CAN YOU TAKE CARE OF THE FIRE, CHEN?

I CAN MOVE THE RADIATED HEAT—

THEN I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE FIRE.

WITH SOUND?

SOUND'S NOTHING BUT PRESSURE WAVES. THE TRICK IS GETTING THE WAVES TO MOVE IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

MY LUCK ISN'T THAT GOOD. THAT'S WHY I'M A THUNDERBOLT.

CHASE UP THE MEDICAL TEAMS. LET'S SEE IF THERE'S ANYONE LEFT ALIVE IN THIS MESS.

AND FIND OSBORN.

IS EVERYTHING COOL ENOUGH TO TOUCH NOW?

YES. YOU KNOW, SONGBIRD, WITH [illegible] LIKE THAT, YOU COULD HAVE BEEN AN AVENGER

SIR! THERE'S BEEN AN EXPLOSION IN THE MAIN BAY AND YOU'RE NEEDED IMMEDIATELY!

I'LL BE RIGHT OUT. REALLY.

I'M COMING OUT.

THE ZEUS EXPLODED. I GUESS WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE AWHILE.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, YOU WON'T BE ON A MISSION FOR SOME TIME.

HERE. LET'S WATCH SOME SPORTS.

SPORTS?

SURE. YOU GOT A FAVORITE? I LIKE RUGBY.

IS THAT LIKE FOOTBALL?

IT'S BETTER THAN FOOTBALL. NO PADDING OR HELMETS, NO STOPPING EVERY MINUTE, NONE OF THE DUMB STUFF.

TWO TEAMS OF GNARLED, SCARRED FREAKS POUNDING THE BLOOD OUT OF EACH OTHER WITH A BALL SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE. IT'S AWESOME.

THEY HAVE THAT ON TV?

LET'S FIND OUT. THIS THING PROBABLY HAS A MILLION CHANNELS.

WHY DID YOU AGREE TO DO THE REALITY SHOW, ROBBIE?

I THOUGHT IT'D BE FUN.

SURE. BUT WHAT ELSE?

I...I WANTED PEOPLE TO SEE ME, I GUESS.

YOU WANTED PEOPLE TO SEE YOU BEING A HERO?

I DUNNO. MAYBE. YEAH.

IS THAT WRONG?

YOU KNOW, I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY SUPER HEROES WEAR BRIGHT COLORS AND BOLD DESIGNS ALONG WITH THEIR MASKS.

IF THE POINT IS THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO BE RECOGNIZED, WHY ISN'T EVERYONE IN BLACK SKI MASKS AND PADDED TACTICAL GEAR?

BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT. SEE, IF A KNIGHT ISN'T IN SHINING ARMOR, THEN HE'S JUST SOME SCARY GUY WITH A BIG SWORD.

I REALIZED, IN FACT, THAT IF YOU DON'T MAKE YOURSELF SEEN, AND SEEN TO BE DOING GOOD THINGS, THEN NO ONE'S GOING TO KNOW WHEN THE GOOD GUYS HAVE SHOWN UP.

SO IF YOU WANTED PEOPLE TO SEE YOU BEING A HERO? THEN I FIGURE THAT'S ALL PART OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION WHEN YOU PUT A MASK ON.

OH, HEY, THEY'RE RERUNNING THE ALL-BLACKS GAME AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THIS...

WHAT'S GOING ON?

NORMAN--

--HOLD ON-- YES, THE MOUNTAIN IS LOCKED DOWN AS OF NOW--INTERNAL STAFF ARE CONTROLLING THE BLAZE.

SOMEONE BLEW UP THE ZEUS. MAIN BAY IS A CRATER.

AND VENOM AND THE SWORDSMAN AREN'T ANSWERING COMMS.

THIS IS MOONSTONE. I NEED LOCATIONS ON VENOM AND SWORDSMAN A.S.A.P.

...OKAY, STAND BY.

NORMAN: VENOM'S IN THE TEAM LOCKER ROOM, TALKING TO HIMSELF, APPARENTLY. NO ONE'S SEEN THE SWORDSMAN.

I WANT A SECURITY TEAM TO THE SWORDSMAN'S QUARTERS *NOW*.

VENOM. PERFECT TIMING. MOUNTAIN'S LOCKED DOWN. TEAM C SAYS THE SWORDSMAN'S BARRICADED HIMSELF IN HIS QUARTERS OR SOMETHING--CAN YOU GIVE US A HAND?

HAND. HEH. OR AN ARM. RIGHT?

VENOM? ARE YOU OKAY, MAN?

HEH. YEAH. SURE. I'M FINE.

I JUST NEED A HAND. OR AN ARM.

OH, NO.

CYBOPP

CHOPP CHOPP CHOPP

CHROPP

AHHHH!

I'M IN CHARGE NOW.

AND THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN IS WHEN I DECIDE TO LET YOU DIE.

STRUCKER QUARTERS

SIR?

YOUR QUARTERS AND THE SURROUNDING CORRIDORS ARE SECURE, SIR.

CALL ME BARON.

I AM ANDREAS, BARON STRUCKER.

MY FATHER WAS A HEREDITARY BARON, AND THEREFORE I TAKE HIS TITLE.

IT WAS WHAT HE WANTED, YOU SEE. THAT I TAKE HIS TITLE AND HIS ROLE.

NO, BARON.

MY FATHER HAD WILL.

HE WAS A SUPERMAN, IN THE TRUEST SENSE OF THE WORD. HE BENT THE WORLD TO HIS WILL.

IT WAS ONLY THE WEAKNESS OF OTHERS THAT DEFEATED HIS PURPOSE. ARE YOU WEAK?

NO. BECAUSE I AM PAYING YOU AND YOUR FELLOW SECURITY GUARDS VERY WELL TO BE STRONG. THE STRUCKER COFFERS RUN DEEP AND RICH.

HOW GOES THE RECOVERY EFFORT?

YOUR BOMB WAS EFFECTIVE, BUT SONGBIRD AND THE RADIOACTIVE MAN EXTINGUISHED THE FLAMES.

THAT SAID, THE MOUNTAIN REMAINS ON LOCKDOWN, AND THE DAMAGE WAS EXTENSIVE.

GOOD ENOUGH.

WE'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH SONGBIRD. CHEN LU CAN PROBABLY BE TURNED, BUT HER...

HAVE SECURITY FORCES LOYAL TO OSBORN BEEN POINTED AT US YET?

THEY'RE INCOMING, BUT SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE HAMPERING THEIR EFFORTS IN OUR DIRECTION.

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THEY ARRIVE. NO QUARTER.

TOWEL.

YES, BARON.

GOOD. AND THEN WE'LL SEE WHAT THEY'RE PREPARED TO GIVE FOR THEIR LIVES.

NO MORE WAITING. NO MORE LISTENING TO OSBORN AND HIS EXCUSES.

HE WILL GIVE ME MY SISTER BACK.

OR EVERYONE IN THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN WILL DIE AT MY SWORD.

TO BE CONTINUED...

RAP SHEET

Thanks to Alexandra Edwards for this month's recap page quote from famous poet and shut-in Emily Dickinson. And now, onto the first mailbag of 2008!

Guys, Gals, Warren Ellis,

I just finished THUNDERBOLTS #117. What a fantastic issue. You REALLY got into the heads of Doc Samson and Mr. Robbie Baldwin. It was a good time reading the sequence of his "therapy". Y'know, I've been a fan of yours a long time, Mr. Ellis. (Traditionally this is where I'm supposed to attempt to dazzle you with my knowledge of your writing credits. Screw that. You know what you wrote. And I loved it.) Believe it or not I've actually been a fan of Speedball's since day one. Don't believe me? I'll bet I'm the first person to EVER claim (Proudly, too!) that I actually own the entire NEW WARRIORS run AND the O.G. Speedball series (whatever happened to Neils the cat anyway?). At any rate, I haven't written in to a Marvel book in, oh, say 20 years but after this last THUNDERBOLTS I felt compelled to. Like we used to say in the service (Yes I AM a proud Gulf War vet, 11 yrs of service before an injury halted my military career), Bravo Zulu Sir, outstanding job.

Ross Parr
VictimVille, CA

Glad to hear you're still following Robbie's adventures! That poor guy needs all the friends he can get right now.

Dear RAP SHEET,

Great scene between Doc Samson and Penance in T-BOLTS #117! I haven't read FRONT LINE, so I was somewhat surprised when I found out that Speedball had become Penance. While I understand how the traumatic experience of the Stamford Disaster might have had dire consequences for his mental wellbeing, I still don't really get why his powers have so significantly changed all of a sudden. Was this explained in FRONT LINE or will it be explained in the pages of this book?

Hm, now that I think about it I wonder if his powers have changed at all. I'm not a Speedball expert--is anyone?--but to me it seemed that he was telekinetically bouncing himself around. Now he's still using telekinetic powers--at least it looks like that to me-- just in a different way. So in the end the change in powers most likely has psychological reasons, as well. Ah, well, enough with the semi-psychological analysis--Dr. Faustus is probably giggling already.

Great work by Mike Deodato, by the way. This book looks just awesome!

Sincerely,
Lars Meyer
Germany

I don't know, Lars, I think Ross, who wrote our first letter, might be a Speedball expert. But I think that you've done a pretty good job of explaining Robbie's powers here--they're still kinetic, they just work in a different way. And once he gets over his psychological issues, maybe he'll be back to bouncing around again. Then again, maybe not…

I have to say, I never thought Norman Osborn would become my favorite character in a team book. What are the odds? And yet in a series where all the stars are dark, Osborn outshines them all. He's the craziest team leader since Magneto got all jacked up on inhalants and broke New York apart, and I can't wait to see where he leads (or misleads) the team next. Likewise, loving the unique brand of friction between the new and old T-Bolts and the action, oh Lordy, the action. The showdown between American Eagle and Bullseye was a real killer (something about Bullseye just makes a guy like seeing him get the crap knocked out of him by blind lawyers and no-name Arizonians alike). Basically it's the only team book on the shelves that I buy and as long as you guys keep writing it, I'll keep reading it.

Here's hoping Norman does the right thing and muscles the whole team down on Peter Parker!

Jake Farley

Well, all I can tell you, Jake, is to keep your eyes on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN in 2008. Someone whose name rhymes with Schnorman Schnosborn might be making an appearance with a certain Schnunderbolts team at schnum point.

Hey T-Bolts people,

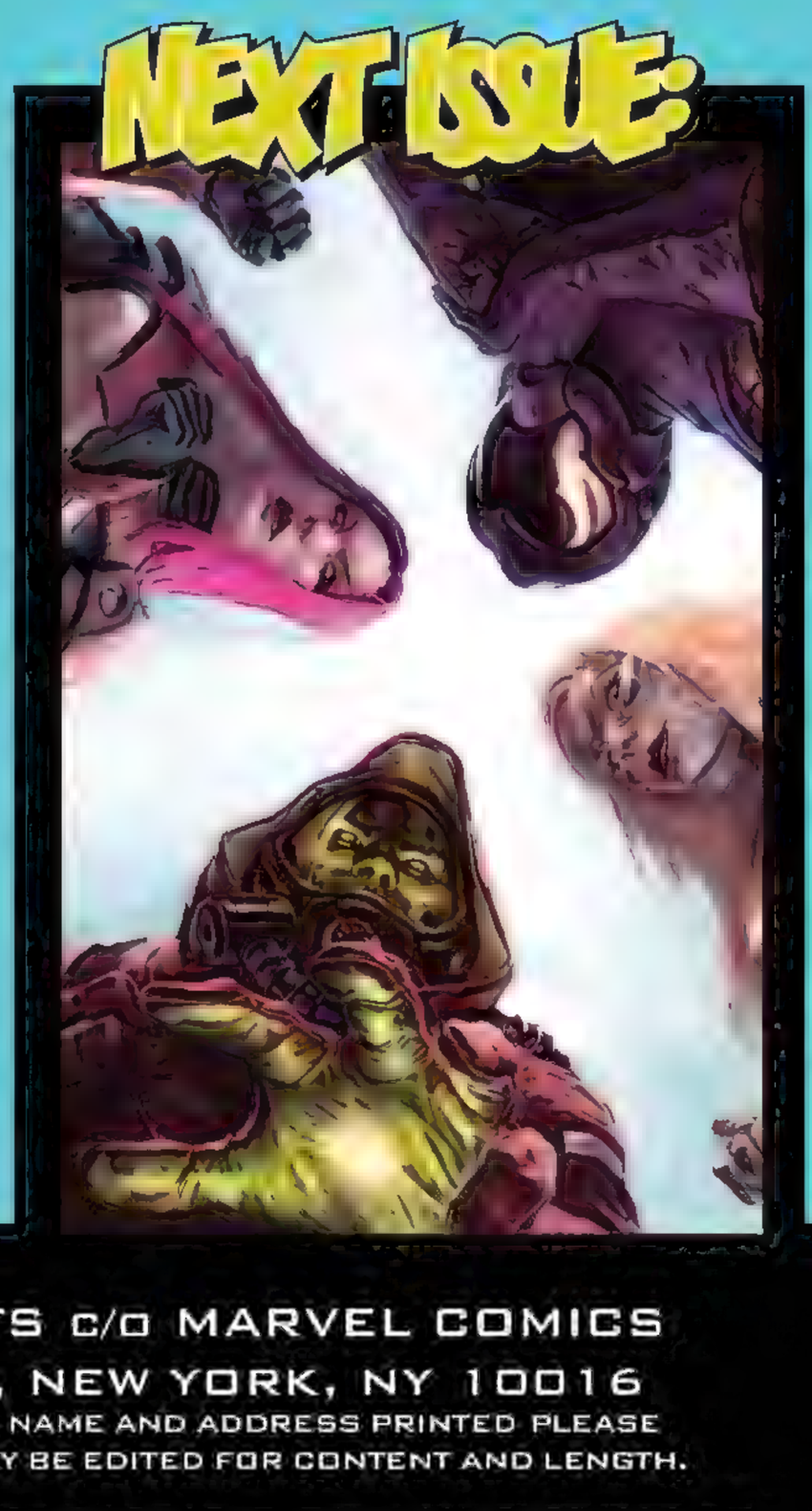
I've been meaning to write in ever since the last issue of the previous arc, but stuff kept getting in the way. I'll start off by saying that I'm one of the readers who only picked up issue #110 because of the CIVIL WAR tie-in, but I was immediately hooked on the amazing stories Ellis and Deodato are telling. It's now one of my five favorite titles Marvel is producing. Ever since the aforementioned installment where Venom BIT A GUY'S ARM OFF(!!), I feel that the book has been virtually flawless in every way. I've always been a big fan of Ellis and Deodato, but I never put two and two together to see the genius idea of having them work together. They are so freakin' awesome together and I am glad that you guys are wisely releasing one-shots whenever they get a little behind in their work rather than bring in a fill-in artist or writer. I will most assuredly be picking up THUNDERBOLTS for many a month as long as you guys keep raising the bar in quality. I think if there is anything I have to be critical of, it's that right now you're essentially publishing two Penance-centric arcs at the same time (Caged Angels, the RELENTLESS mini) when one is more than enough. (Sorry, but it can't all be perfection!) Still, A+s all around.

Daniel Fidler
Newton, Massachusetts

Aw, no love for Penance, Daniel? Watch out, I might have to sic Ross on you. But stay tuned to more of this arc--we'll be seeing a lot more of the rest of the team as we finish up.

That's all for this month, folks. Remember to send in your quotes for the recap page, and we'll see you next time!

Molly



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THUNDERBOLTS

As Robbie "Penance" Baldwin continues to edge closer to a complete mental breakdown, T-Bolts director Norman Osborn seeks outside help from super hero psychiatrist Doctor Leonard Samson, who seems to have started Robbie on the road to recovery.

Right now, in the Thunderbolts' prison cells, the recently-captured Caprice, Mindwave, Mirage and Bluestreak plan to psychically take down the Thunderbolts from the inside out. As Norman Osborn has goblinish visions and Venom takes full control of Mac Gargan, killing and eating a number of Thunderbolts Mountain guards, Swordsman orchestrates the explosion of the Zeus, the T-Bolts' flying craft, and seems to be fully prepared to take on his father's villainous legacy...

"Let your plans be dark and as impenetratable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt."
--Sun Tzu

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THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN.

BLUE STREAK. DO YOU HAVE CONTROL OF VENOM?

OH, YEAH. AND THEN SOME.

CAGED ANGELS PART IV

WARREN ELLIS: WRITER • MIKE DEODATO, JR.: ARTIST

RAIN BEREDO: COLORIST • RS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE: LETTERER • MARKO DJURDJEVIC: COVER

MOLLY LAZER: EDITOR • TOM BREVOORT: EXECUTIVE EDITOR • JOE QUESADA: EDITOR IN CHIEF • DAN BUCKLEY: PUBLISHER

MY GOD...

WELL. NO POINT BEING SQUEAMISH NOW.

THAT SAID, BULLSEYE IS UNDERGOING THAT MEDICAL PROCEDURE. POINTLESS THINKING ABOUT HIM NOW.

AGREED.

NOT SURE WHAT TO DO WITH PENANCE. PHYSICALLY, HE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY WEAK RIGHT NOW, MENTALLY HE'S QUITE CALM, AND HE'S SEALED IN THE FIELD TEAM AREA.

I THINK PERHAPS WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE OTHERS. LEAVE HIM ALONE WITH SAMSON UNTIL THE END.

I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO KICKING OVER THE TRASHCANS IN SAMSON'S HEAD.

ALL RIGHT. FOCUS ON THE OTHERS.

OSBORN, MOONSTONE, RADIOACTIVE MAN, SONGBIRD, THE SWORDSMAN AND VENOM...

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

WELL, *BRING* HIM TO THE DAMN PHONE! I'M NOT PAYING *TRIBUTE* TO SOMEONE I HAVE THE GOVERNMENT-GIVEN POWER TO *SELL TO THE DAMN INDIANS!*

SWORDSMAN'S LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS QUARTERS AND APPEARS TO HAVE BRIBED A DOZEN OF OUR SECURITY AGENTS TO DEFEND IT.

WELL...OKAY. WHAT DOES HE WANT?

THE FOURTH REICH! POLAND! A CASTLE! LAMPSHADES MADE OUT OF HUMAN SKIN!

HE WANTS HIS SISTER BACK.

HIS SISTER IS DEAD.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT, YOU WEREN'T CLEARED FOR THE INFORMATION. WELL, WHAT THE HELL.

WE OFFERED TO CLONE HIS SISTER. BRING HER BACK, ESSENTIALLY. GROW THE CLONE SUPERFAST, ENCODE THE BRAIN WITH THE DEAD VERSION'S MEMORIES, THE WHOLE BIT.

WE CAN DO THAT NOW?

SURE. ANYWAY, THAT'S HOW WE SECURED MR. STRUCKER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE THUNDERBOLTS PROGRAM. DO THE JOB FOR A YEAR, GET YOUR SISTER BACK AND TWO TICKETS OUT OF THE U.S.A.

WOW. THAT'S...THAT'S ACTUALLY A PRETTY DISGUSTING WAY TO TREAT HIM.

GET HIM ON THE PHONE!

I SWEAR WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER I'M GOING TO CUT YOUR *SKIN* OFF AND FEED IT TO *PIGS!*

ANDREAS--OH, BUT HE NOW WANTS US TO CALL HIM BARON STRUCKER--CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ZEUS EXPLODING, IN THE NAME OF HYDRA.

HYDRA BEING THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION THAT HIS FATHER, THE ACTUAL BARON STRUCKER, RAN FOR YEARS.

AND NOW HE REFUSES TO SPEAK TO NORMAN. HE SAID, *"FURTHER EXPOSURE TO MR. OSBORN'S VOICE WOULD DEMEAN ME ON A CELLULAR LEVEL."* IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY FUNNY.

THE *HELL* WITH THIS!

YOU GO DOWN THERE. YOU TAKE A SECURITY TEAM AND YOU GO DOWN THERE.

YOU *CRUSH* ANY RESISTANCE, YOU *DRAG* STRUCKER OUT OF HIS BEDROOM, AND YOU *KILL* HIM RIGHT THERE IN THE CORRIDOR.

THERE. MY COLORS.

MY PERSONAL DETAIL.

OSBORN WILL OBVIOUSLY SEND SOME OF HIS OWN SOLDIERS TO TAKE OUR POSITION.

THE SECRET TO DEALING WITH MEN LIKE OSBORN IS THIS--INFLICT MASSIVE LOSSES AT THE VERY START AND HE WILL LOSE STOMACH FOR THE LONGER WAR.

YOUR ORDERS, THEREFORE, ARE SIMPLE:

IF YOU SEE ANYONE, KILL THEM.

STAND DOWN!

DROP YOUR ARMS AND THIS IS ALL OVER WITH NO TROUBLE!

STAND DOWN! YOU WON'T BE DISCIPLINED!

OKAY.

I SEE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS MYSELF.

PATHETIC.

I OFFER YOU RICHES IN RETURN FOR BASIC COMPETENCE, AND YOU GIVE ME *THIS*.

SWORDSMAN. THROW AWAY YOUR WEAPON AND LAY FLAT ON THE GROUND, NOW.

WE HAVE ORDERS TO SHOOT TO KILL.

ORDERS ARE FOR GIVING, NOT FOR TAKING.

OH, THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL.

IT'S TAKING ALL I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM REALIZING THEY CAN USE THE NANOCHAINS-- CAN SOMEONE HELP ME OUT THERE?

SWORDSMAN HAS KILLED THE SECURITY DETAIL AND IS ON THE MOVE.

WE SHOULD GO IN THERE.

NO, HOLD ON...

HE'S HEADED RIGHT TOWARDS VENOM.

THEY'LL KILL EACH OTHER.

IF WE'RE LUCKY. WORST CASE SCENARIO, WE TAKE THE WOUNDED SURVIVOR.

I SAY WE LET THEM RUN RIGHT INTO EACH OTHER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

I WONDER IF WE CAN GET A SECURITY CAMERA ON THE FIGHT.

AND PERHAPS SOME POPCORN.

THIS IS INSANE.

NN

YOU OKAY?

YEAH. SUDDEN HEADACHE, OR...

...PSYCHIC PROBING.

HELLO. DID YOU REALLY THINK ONE OF THE BEST PSYCHIATRISTS IN THE WORLD WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TELL WHEN A TELEPATH'S TRYING TO SLIDE IN THE SIDE DOOR?

OH.

ROBBIE, ARE YOU FEELING ANY... DIFFERENT?

MM? NAH. WE FOUND OUT BACK IN THE NEW WARRIORS DAYS THAT TELEPATHS DON'T REALLY WORK ON ME, DUNNO WHY.

THERE AREN'T ANY TELEPATHS ON THE TEAM, THOUGH.

OKAY.

AAAA

HE KNEW I WAS THERE, AND HE ARRANGED A THOUGHT IN THE FRONT OF HIS MIND FOR ME.

ALL THAT RAGE... THEY ALL HAVE IT, HE SAYS, ALL THE GAMMA-CHANGED... AND HE JUST *MANAGES* HIS.

AND THEN HE JUST KIND OF STEPPED ASIDE, AND ALL THAT RAGE HIT ME LIKE A SHOTGUN BLAST...

JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE. HIM AND BALDWIN.

CONCENTRATE ON VENOM AND THE SWORDSMAN.

OKAY, OKAY...

THERE.

I WONDER HOW A TELEPATH GOT INSIDE THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN?

MIND YOU, I SAY THAT, BUT I WALKED IN WITH A KNIFE...

I DUNNO. THEY WOULDN'T HAVE LET A PSYCHIC IN THE BASE, NOT WITHOUT NULLIFIERS OR SOMETHING...

MISSED!

WHOA.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

TURNS OUT YOU'RE STILL IN THERE AFTER ALL, ROBBIE.

ANOTHER DRINK?

SURE. WE SHOULD PROBABLY CALL OSBORN, LET HIM KNOW THERE'S AN ATTACK TELEPATH IN THE PLACE.

PROBABLY. BUT I IMAGINE NORMAN OSBORN AND KARLA SOFEN CAN FIND THAT OUT ALL ON THEIR OWN.

ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

YOU KNOW... THIS IS NO GOOD.

I KNOW, I KNOW. BEING UNABLE TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON IS KILLING ME.

FINALLY.

AND, REALLY, IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD, LETTING EVERYONE RUN AROUND THE MOUNTAIN LIKE THIS.

I NEED TO TAKE PERSONAL CHARGE OF THE SITUATION. IMPOSE SOME DISCIPLINE.

...REALLY?

DAMN RIGHT. TIME TO SHOW YOU PEOPLE HOW IT'S DONE. MOONSTONE, YOU'RE IN CHARGE HERE UNTIL I GET BACK.

YOU'RE KIDDING ME. YOU WANT ME TO CONTROL THE THUNDERBOLTS?

I WAS PLAYING A GAME. CAN IT WAIT UNTIL I'VE BEATEN THIS SNAKE THAT'S CHASING ME?

OKAY, NOW I'M ACTUALLY REALLY SCARED.

SO THEY SENT YOU TO BRING ME IN?

WHAT?

THE MAN WITH THE LITTLE STICK IN HIS HAND? THAT'S WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE AFRAID OF? THE USELESS EUROTRASH?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, MONSTER. BUT I'M OUT OF PATIENCE. IF YOU'RE NOT WITH ME, YOU'RE AGAINST ME.

THIS OUGHT TO BE FUNNY...

WITH YOU? I'M GOING TO EAT YOU!

NO.

RRRAAAAA

OWWW!

I DIDN'T DIE THE LAST TIME I TOOK A PIECE OF YOUR DUMB SWORD IN ME--WHAT DO YOU THINK IS DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

THIS TIME I'M STILL HOLDING ON TO IT.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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THUNDERBOLTS

In the prison cells of Thunderbolts Mountain, the recently-captured Caprice, Mindwave, Mirage and Bluestreak are implementing a plan to mentally take down the Thunderbolts from the inside out. Their plan seems to be working, as Swordsman blows up the T-Bolts' flying craft, pits factions of guards against each other and runs Venom through with his sword. Penance remains locked away with superhuman psychiatrist Leonard Samson. And while Songbird urges her team members to figure out what is going on, Moonstone seems content to stay in Norman Osborn's office, occupying herself with meaningless diversions. Norman himself has been tormented by goblinish visions, and, not able to take it any longer, has vowed to do something about the situation himself...

"Some innocents scape not the thunderbolts.
Melt Egypt into Nile! And kindly creatures
Turn all to serpents!"

--William Shakespeare, Antony & Cleopatra, II.v

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ALWAYS THE SAME. I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING MYSELF.

TYPICAL.

CAN'T RELY ON ANYONE THESE DAYS. ALL TOO BUSY READING ABOUT DYING POP STARS AND IRON MAN'S PANTS.

YOU TWO! REPORT TO THE QUARTERMASTER AND GET YOURSELVES A PAIR OF DRESSES, ON THE DOUBLE!

I ALWAYS KNEW IT'D COME DOWN TO THIS. I ALWAYS HAVE TO BE THE MAN.

GOOD OLD NORMAN OSBORN. HE'LL BAIL US OUT. HE'LL SAVE THE DAY. HE'LL BE THE HERO.

NORMAN WILL MAKE THE HARD CHOICES. NORMAN HAS NO FEELINGS.

NORMAN WILL MAKE THE GIRL PREGNANT AND THEN SNAP HER NECK IN PUBLIC. NORMAN WON'T MIND. NORMAN WILL DO WHAT IT TAKES.

NORMAN WILL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING, DON'T YOU LIFT A DAMN FINGER TO HELP OR, GOD FORBID, DO YOUR DAMN JOB...

THERE'S A SPACE MONSTER AND A MAD SWORDSMAN LOOSE IN THE BASE--SHALL WE TRUST THE HUGE SECURITY COMPLEMENT AND THE TEAM OF SUPERHUMANS TO DEAL WITH IT?

OH, NO. LET'S MAKE A COMPLETE DOG'S BREAKFAST OF THE WHOLE OPERATION.

SO *NORMAN* HAS TO CLEAN THINGS UP.

I'M A FRICKING MARTYR TO MY OWN INNATE HEROISM, IS WHAT I AM.

NORMAN OSBORN, AMERICA'S LAST HERO.

THAT'S WHAT I AM.

ONE DAY I'M GOING TO RUN THIS COUNTRY. AND DO YOU THINK ANYONE WILL APPRECIATE ME THEN?

OF COURSE THEY WON'T. OF COURSE THEY WON'T.

IT'LL BE *"MISTER PRESIDENT OSBORN SIR, I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO TAKE OUT MY GARBAGE. COULD YOU DO IT FOR ME?"*

THAT'S WHAT IT'LL BE LIKE.

"PRESIDENT OSBORN, I'D LOVE TO BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING COMPETENTLY, BUT MY FAMILY TREE LOOKS LIKE TWO STICKS JUTTING OUT OF A DEAD RACCOON."

HITLER NEVER HAD THIS KIND OF TROUBLE. PEOPLE JUST DID AS HE TOLD THEM.

MUST'VE BEEN NICE.

AHA. JUST WHERE I LEFT IT.

BECAUSE I COULDN'T TRUST ANYONE TO DO IT FOR ME, COULD I?

THERE. JUST AS I LEFT IT.

EVEN THE MASK. NOT IN MY DRAWER AT ALL. DOWN HERE. SAFE. SLEEPING.

WAITING.

=SNFFFFF=

AAAAHHH. I'M SO GLAD I NEVER WASHED THIS PARTICULAR COSTUME.

SMELLS LIKE DEATH, BLONDES AND VICTORY.

MAYBE THIS COULD BE MY PRESIDENTIAL UNIFORM.

DO PRESIDENTS HAVE UNIFORMS? I SUPPOSE NOT. STILL, SINCE I'D BE THE PRESIDENT, I COULD DO WHAT I LIKE, REALLY...

I'D REWRITE ALL THIS SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION LEGISLATIVE JUNK, I'LL TELL YOU THAT FOR NOTHING.

"ARE YOU A SELF-PROCLAIMED SUPER HERO?"

"WHY, SHUCKS, SIR, I SURE AM A REGULAR GUY IN BAD UNDERPANTS WHO FIGHTS CRIME WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING ONE DAMN THING ABOUT HOW THE WORLD WORKS, YES."

"EXCELLENT. I SEND YOU NOW TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP WHERE YOU WILL BE STERILIZED, LOBOTOMIZED, TENDERIZED AND PASTEURIZED."

"SO SAYS PRESIDENT GOBLIN!"

ACTUALLY, THAT'S A BIT MORE DOCTOR DOOM, ISN'T IT?

STILL, THE IDEA'S SOUND.

NOTE TO SELF: GIVE NAKED DICTATION MORE OFTEN. THE IDEAS SEEM TO FLOW MORE FREELY.

SO GLAD I DECIDED TO KEEP THE OLD KIT HANDY.

ONE MORE THING.

THERE.

NOW LET'S TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS.

AND THEN, I THINK, I SHALL VICIOUSLY BEAT SOME COMPLETE STRANGERS AT RANDOM.

THEY'RE BOUND TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO DESERVE IT AT SOME POINT, AFTER ALL.

SWORDSMAN, SWORDSMAN... WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH YOU?

ASIDE FROM KILL YOU, OF COURSE.

OF COURSE I HAVE TO KILL YOU.

IT'S WHAT THE LITTLE PEOPLE EXPECT ME TO DO.

THIS IS HOW I DISPLAY MY HEROISM.

GUARDING THE ELEVATOR.

YEP.

WHY ARE WE DOING THAT AGAIN, FRANK?

BECAUSE THE CRAZY GUY WITH THE SWORD AND THE CANNIBAL FREAKAZOID ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUILDING AND UNLIKELY TO POP OUT OF THIS ELEVATOR.

AND WE LIKE BEING ALIVE, BOB, YES WE DO.

Y'KNOW, THIS CEILING IS FILTHY. SOMEONE SHOULD DO SOMETHING.

PING

EVENING.

HUH HUH HUH HELLO...

YOU LOOK NERVOUS.

GUH GUH GUH GOD NO.

GOOD. NO ONE LIKES A NERVOUS SECURITY GUARD. IT DOESN'T CREATE A SENSE OF...WELL, SECURITY.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD DIRECT ME TO THE ARM-EATING RETARD AND THE SWORD-WAVING ARISTO.

I HAVE TO PUNISH THEM, YOU SEE.

THE, UH, VENOM AND SWORDSMAN, THE, YES, SECTOR EIGHT ON FLOOR C.

MUCH OBLIGED.

BACK TO WORK, BOYS. BEST JOB IN THE WORLD, EH?

I'M GOING TO BE IN THERAPY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

--NO, NO SIGN OF THE SWORDSMAN.

VENOM'S GOING TO LIVE. THE BLADE STRIKE MISSED VITAL ORGANS, AND THE SYMBIOTE'S ALREADY MOVED TO PLUG THE WOUND AND START REGROWING TISSUE.

MY MAIN CONCERN, FRANKLY, IS HIS MENTAL CONDITION.

HE'S SAYING HIS SYMBIOTE'S BEEN TALKING TO HIM. MAKING HIM DO THINGS.

OKAY. LOOK, CAN YOU SEDATE HIM WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE MEDICAL EFFORT?

NO OFFENSE, BUT I'M GOING TO CRAM ENOUGH CHEMICALS INTO HIM TO PUT OUT A RIVER FULL OF HIPPOS BEFORE I EVEN ATTEMPT MOVING HIM. OUT.

HIS SYMBIOTE CAN'T SPEAK TO HIM. I'VE READ HIS FILE.

HE'S SEEING THINGS. OR HEARING THEM, I GUESS.

I DON'T CARE THAT MUCH.

I THINK THE TIME HAS COME TO EAT OUR NEW GUEST IN THE HOLDING CELLS.

WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?

PERHAPS SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO.

WELL, I DIDN'T.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH SONGBIRD AND THE RADIOACTIVE MAN.

SO.

YOU HAVE A FREAKOUT, AND THEN YOU'RE PLACED IN A STRESS-FREE ENVIRONMENT, LIGHTLY DOSED WITH A TASTY CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM DEPRESSANT, AND SEALED OFF AGAINST THREATS.

AND THEN, IN A RELAXED AND UNGUARDED MOMENT, YOUR OLD SPEEDBALL POWER SIGNATURE COMES BACK.

YEAH.

BEATS THE CRAP OUT OF ME.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS, ROBBIE?

NO, ROBBIE. GIVE IT A TRY.

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I DIDN'T KNOW THIS PLACE WAS BAD FOR ME. I DUNNO.

IT MEANS YOU CAN BE RESTORED. COMPLETELY.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BE?

IF YOU REALLY THINK YOU NEED TO CONTINUE TO REDEEM YOURSELF FOR STAMFORD...

...SHOW ME THE LAW THAT SAYS YOU HAVE TO DO IT AS PENANCE.

NORMAN OSBORN.

I FIND HIM AND I MAKE HIM GIVE ME MY SISTER. AND A HELICOPTER. AND THEN A PLANE.

OR I KILL HIM. AND THEN MAKE HIM GET UP AGAIN AND GIVE ME MY SISTER AND A HELICOPTER AND MONEY.

HA HA HA HA HA HA

WHAT?

IS THERE SOMEONE...?

I HEARD SOMEONE. SHOW YOURSELF.

I COMMAND YOU TO SHOW YOURSELF!

I'M GOING TO BE RUNNING THIS BASE IN AN HOUR'S TIME! SHOW YOURSELF NOW, OR I'LL EXECUTE YOU ON THE FLIGHT DECK!

PLEASE?

BRRR
BRRR
BRRR
BRRR

MOMMY.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE A MOTHER!

A PIG COUGHED AND YOU FELL OUT!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! I'M A *BARON!*

I AM GOD!

HA HA HA!

NAAAA

NGH

OH, GOOD TRY!

YOU COULDN'T HIT A BARN IN THE BUTT AT POINT BLANK RANGE, BUT GOOD *TRY*, BOY!

OOOPS.

TO THINK SOME PEOPLE BELIEVED YOU COULD MAKE A HERO ONE DAY.

I KNEW BETTER. I ALWAYS DID.

YOU HAVE THE SOUL OF A DEAD RAT. YOU TELL YOURSELF A LIE THE SECOND YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING, JUST SO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

I'VE TOLERATED YOUR USE OF OXYGEN IN MY MOUNTAIN FOR LONG ENOUGH.

DON'T WORRY. SOON IT WON'T HURT AT ALL.

SMILE.

SO WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE GET THERE? ASK THEM IF THEY'RE ALL MARAUDING PSYCHICS?

WE BEAT THEM UNCONSCIOUS AND SEE IF ANYTHING CHANGES. IF NOT, WE APOLOGIZE WHEN THEY WAKE UP.

OH, GOOD, IT'S YOU. HOLD ON, PLEASE.

YEAH, I HAVE THEM HERE, WHAT DID YOU... YEAH, OKAY.

I'M BEING ASKED IF YOU WANT TO ATTEND THE SWORDSMAN. HE'S BEEN FOUND AND IT'S NOT GOOD. DECK C, SECTOR 10.

THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT THE GREEN GOBLIN'S INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN.

OH, HELL.

CHEN? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I BELIEVE I SHOULD GIVE [illegible] IN THE [illegible] CANCER

BIG [illegible] THE SIZE OF [illegible] BABY SEALS

CHEN?

YES. I THINK IT'S TIME. I FLOODED THE BASE WITH INTENSE RADIOACTIVITY AND INTRODUCED EVERYONE TO ITS GOD OF CANCER.

CANCER CAN BE FUN. YOU'LL SEE! BWAHAHAHA!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

YOU HEARD HIM! I DON'T WANT CANCER!

FAIR POINT, ACTUALLY. BUT I THINK YOU GOT HIM THE SECOND OR THIRD TIME, SO YOU SHOULD QUIT THAT NOW.

DAMMIT.

OKAY. I'LL MAKE SURE SWORDSMAN'S SECURE BEFORE I DO ANYTHING ELSE. LET THEM KNOW I'M EN ROUTE.

AND THE GREEN GOBLIN?

IF HE'S RIDING A PINK ELEPHANT, JUST SALUTE HIM AND LET HIM PASS.

OTHERWISE, SHOOT HIM IN THE LEGS AND THEN HIT HIM TWENTY OR THIRTY TIMES.

THEY HIRED MEN WITH THE SCYTHES SO SHARP TO CUT HIM OFF AT THE KNEEEEE

THEY ROLLED HIM AND TIED HIM BY THE WAIST, AND SERVED HIM MOST BARBAROUSLLLLYYY

OKAY, WHERE IS THE STUPID DAMNED--

--OH.

IS HE... IS HE STILL ALIVE?

JUST BARELY. WE'RE JUST NOT SURE WHERE TO START, HE'D BEEN BEATEN ALMOST TO DEATH BEFORE HE WAS NAILED UP--

GET HIM DOWN! HE'LL STRANGLE UP THERE BEFORE YOU GET THE WOUNDS TREATED, YOU *MORON!*

I THINK WE'RE ALL SET NOW.

IS EVERYONE READY FOR THIS PART?

WE AGREED. WHEN WE FIRST GOT TOGETHER, WE AGREED-- FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.

WE HAVE TO STOP THE THUNDERBOLTS AND THEIR ILLEGAL ACTIONS. AND LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES.

ALL RIGHT, THEN.

THE THUNDERBOLTS HAVE TO START KILLING THE HUMAN STAFF.

THERE'S NO WAY THEY CAN SPIN THAT.

I HAVE A SUGGESTION.

KILL BALDWIN AND SAMSON FIRST. WE CAN'T USE THEM, SO LET'S TAKE THEM ALL THE WAY OFF THE BOARD.

AND WE HAVE AN OBVIOUS CANDIDATE TO USE FOR THAT.

OF COURSE. WHY DIDN'T I SEE THAT BEFORE?

AND NO ONE CAN STOP ME FINDING DOC FREAKING SAMSON AT THE END.

I'VE WANTED TO KILL HIM FOR *YEARS.*

THE CORRIDORS ARE JUST LIKE THAT GAME OF SNAKE ON MY PHONE.

EARNING YOUR MONEY, I SEE?

WHUH?

CATCH!

IT'S HALLOWEEN ALREADY?

MAN, MY KID'S GONNA BE PISSED. I TOLD HIM HE COULD DRESS UP AS IRON MAN AND SEND HIS LITTLE BUDDIES TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMP I BUILT HIM IN THE BACKYARD.

I HIRED SOME REALLY, REALLY DUMB SECURITY FORCES.

=SIGH=

GUESS I'LL HAVE TO KILL THEM *ALL* NOW.

I HAVE TO DO *EVERYTHING* MYSELF.

CAGED ANGELS PART V

WARREN ELLIS: WRITER • MIKE DEODATO, JR.: ARTIST

RAIN BEREDO: COLORIST • RS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE: LETTERER • MARKO DJURDJEVIC: COVER

MOLLY LAZER: EDITOR • TOM BREVOORT: EXECUTIVE EDITOR • JOE QUESADA: EDITOR IN CHIEF • DAN BUCKLEY: PUBLISHER

RAP SHEET

First off, two acknowledgements for readers who submitted quotes for our recap page: thank you to Ryan Schaefer for issue #119's quote, from Sun Tzu, the author of The Art of War, who was born in 544 BC. And thanks to Jason Hussa for this month's quote from some guy named Billy Shakespeare.

Lately, Venom has been the main topic of conversation in the letters we received. You seem to be feeling the symbiote love…or not

Hey T-Bolts,

I'm a fifteen year old comic book reader. (I'll be 16 in March!) Anyways, I wanted to write in after the last issue, T-BOLTS #118. I started collecting this series at #110 because I'm a pretty big Warren Ellis fan and I haven't been let down yet. This series has been consistently entertaining on a monthly basis, something which unfortunately, seems almost rare these days. I love the current team especially.

Penance is probably my favorite member, as he's just psychologically chilling. Big props to Ellis for making a character so interesting and driven. I'm really ecstatic to see Norman losing it more and more each issue. The original Green Goblin is one of my favorite villains and I'm hoping he'll be making a big return soon. Also Ellis has managed to do something no other writer has been able to do in years; make Venom scary again! After the last issue, the rest of the team had better watch out! There's a new psycho on the block and he ain't pretty!

I want to give a big congratulations to Mike Deodato Jr. for his amazing work on the pencils! He's been doing an absolutely bang up job, and I can't imagine anyone else drawing in his place. I can't wait to see where Swordsman is going with his plan. I'm sure Mr. Ellis has something up his sleeve! I see a possible Green Goblin vs. Swordsman bout coming up.

For my final words I just want to again congratulate both Warren Ellis and Mike Deodato Jr. for doing a fantastic job on a great book. I'd also like to extend a thank you to the following: Rain Beredo (great use of colors, I might add!), Albert Deschesne, Marko Djurdjevic (big fan of his amazing covers!) and Molly Lazer! Thank you to all for giving me a comic book that I can look forward to every month, and one I don't have to regret spending 3 dollars on each month. THUNDERBOLTS is a fantastic series and I hope it goes on for a long, long time!

So until the Mighty Thor joins the T-Bolts, Make Mine Marvel!

Michael Rassel
Little Chute, Wisconsin

Thanks for all the praises, Michael! What did you think of Swordsman vs. Venom last issue?

Hey guys,

Just wanted to say I love the whole Thunderbolts team and everyone in it, especially Venom and Penance. Penance is a great character and people are beginning to see that, hence the mini series which is great also, and it took him from a dormant character as Speedball and now he is definitely a great main character. However, I feel like Venom got hardly any respect until the CIVIL WAR. I have been following Venom since I can remember and almost religiously since Mac acquired the suit in the MK SPIDER-MAN series, and I have to say that with what happened in issue #118 of the Thunderbolts comic it reaffirms the awesomeness of Venom. The way that he has been made out in this comic makes him an A-list super-villain (or hero, I suppose). Most would have him in their arc for a while and then he would putter out, but now with his delightful cannibalistic tendencies in the forefront and independence from the host, he is a well rounded character, FINALLY! I geeked out at the sight of Venom chomping on the guard's arm and eating the bodies and I loved the panel when he had the guard's helmet on. It was a perfect issue for the perfect character.

Chris
Springfield, Illinois

"Delightful cannibalistic tendencies"… heh, heh, heh…Venom sure looked cute in that helmet, though.

Dear T-Bolts Team,

First let me say how much I enjoy the way you are progressing the Thunderbolts. The characters are rarely one-dimensional, and interact with each other in a realistic way. I'm also impressed with the artistic style of the comic. A darker Thunderbolts needed a more serious look and the visuals are true eye candy.

Having said that, and I really can't emphasize enough how much I enjoy your work, I feel the need to express disappointment in the progression of Venom, especially after one reader in the current issue seemed pleased with Venom's savage turn. I've been a huge fan of Venom (I'm a long time Spider-Man fan), particularly because he justifies his homicidal actions in the name of justice--he puts the "lethal" in "Lethal Protector." It was no surprise that Venom's first mini-series involved the Punisher, who shares a similar philosophy, but not as extreme. Unfortunately for me, Venom is far from the ends-justify-the-means "Lethal Protector," but some savage beast who apparently wants to eat people. Like I said, most of the characters on the team are not one-dimensional, so it is very curious to me why one would take a complex character like Venom and reduce him to a mindless beast. Venom is not Carnage--perhaps Carnage would have been a better addition to the Thunderbolts if a crazy monster is what was desired (though Carnage isn't exactly sane...). I realize my complaint won't change anything, but I would at least like to know the reasoning behind devolving one of my favorite Marvel characters. Other than that, keep up the excellent work!

Nick

I'm sorry you're not feeling Venom's savage turn, Nick. Venom might not be feeling much for a while either…what with being impaled and everything…

See you next issue for the conclusion of "Caged Angels"!

Molly

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THUNDERBOLTS

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ELLIS
DEODATO
BEREDO

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Once they were among the worst examples of villainy mankind had to offer! But now, conscripted by the Commission on Superhuman Affairs, they have been transformed into a force for social justice! They are the Thunderbolts--federal marshals, empowered to track down and bring in unlicensed, unregistered superhuman offenders coast-to-coast!

THUNDERBOLTS

In the prison cells of Thunderbolts Mountain, the recently captured Caprice, Mindwave, Mirage and Bluestreak are implementing a strategy to mentally take down the Thunderbolts from the inside out. Their plan seems to be working, as Swordsman blows up the T-Bolts' flying craft, pits factions of guards against each other and runs Venom through with his sword. While Radioactive Man gets bludgeoned after announcing his decision to give cancer to everyone on the base, Norman Osborn dons his goblin gear once more and goes on a rampage, blowing up guards and crucifying Swordsman. Amidst the ensuing chaos, another monster has been awakened, one with a deadly aim and murder on his mind.

Meanwhile, Penance, who seems to have rediscovered some of his old Speedball powers, remains locked away with superhuman psychiatrist Leonard Samson...but not for long, as Moonstone has decided to take them both down with one fell swoop...

"I entered literary life as a meteor, and I shall leave it like a thunderbolt." -- Guy de Maupassant

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EXPLOSIONS.

YEAH. I THINK IT MAY BE TIME TO INTERCEDE.

PHONE'S DEAD.

NOW WE BREACH THE DOOR AND GET YOU OUT OF HERE, ROBBIE.

NOW WHAT?

DOCTOR SAMSON.

MOONSTONE. GOOD TIMING FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE. WHAT'S THE SITUATION OUT THERE?

VERY BAD.

BUT IT'LL ALL BE BETTER AFTER YOU'RE *DEAD.*

OH, MY GOD. I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

YOU GAVE ME AN EXCUSE.

CAGED ANGELS PART VI

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OH, TRUST ME. IT'S *ALL* GAMMA-ENHANCED.

GOOD FOR YOU.

WHAT THE HELL? HAS SHE--

GONE NUTS? THE TECHNICAL TERM IS "COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY HATSTAND."

TRUST ME ON THAT. I'M A PSYCHIATRIST AND EVERYTHING.

I'VE HATED YOU FOR SO LONG--

=UFFF=

ROBBIE, GET BACK--

I DON'T HATE YOU, ROBBIE.

YOU JUST IRRITATE ME.

OH, NO.

ROBBIE.

DON'T KILL HER.

HA HA HAHA HA HA HA

LEVEL 6

HOLDING CELLS

BARRACKS EXIT

HOLDING CELLS

I SHOULDN'T DO THIS. I REALLY SHOULDN'T DO THIS.

BUT GOD HELP ME, I'VE WANTED TO FOR SO LONG.

SHOULD HAVE THROWN YOU OFF A BRIDGE THE MOMENT I LAID EYES ON YOU, SONGBIRD--

WHUFF

NATURE'S LITTLE *JOKE*-- GIVING A WOMAN THE SUPER-POWER OF NOT BEING ABLE TO DAMN WELL *SHUT UP*--

AAAAAAA!

FINALLY, YOU MAKE A SOUND I *LIKE*.

HURGH

HATE YOU-- SO MUCH--

KILL YOU-- ALWAYS WANTED YOU DEAD--

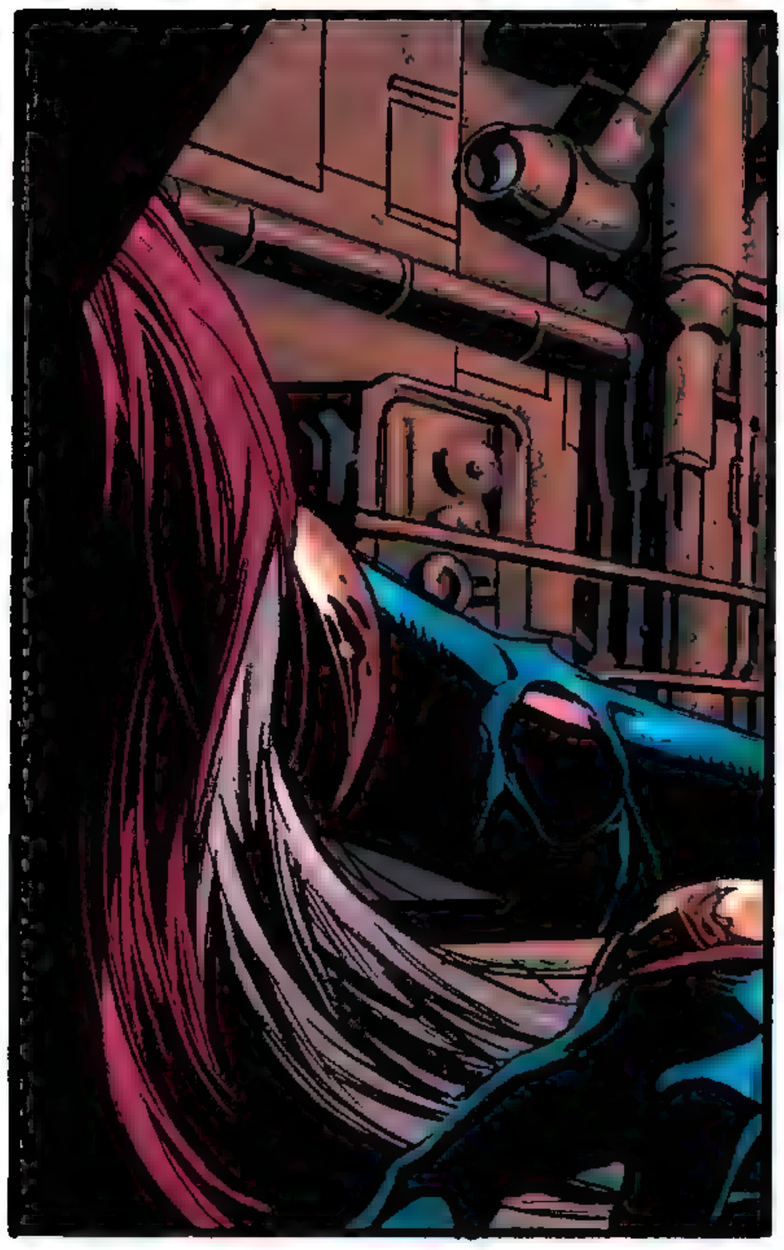
NNF

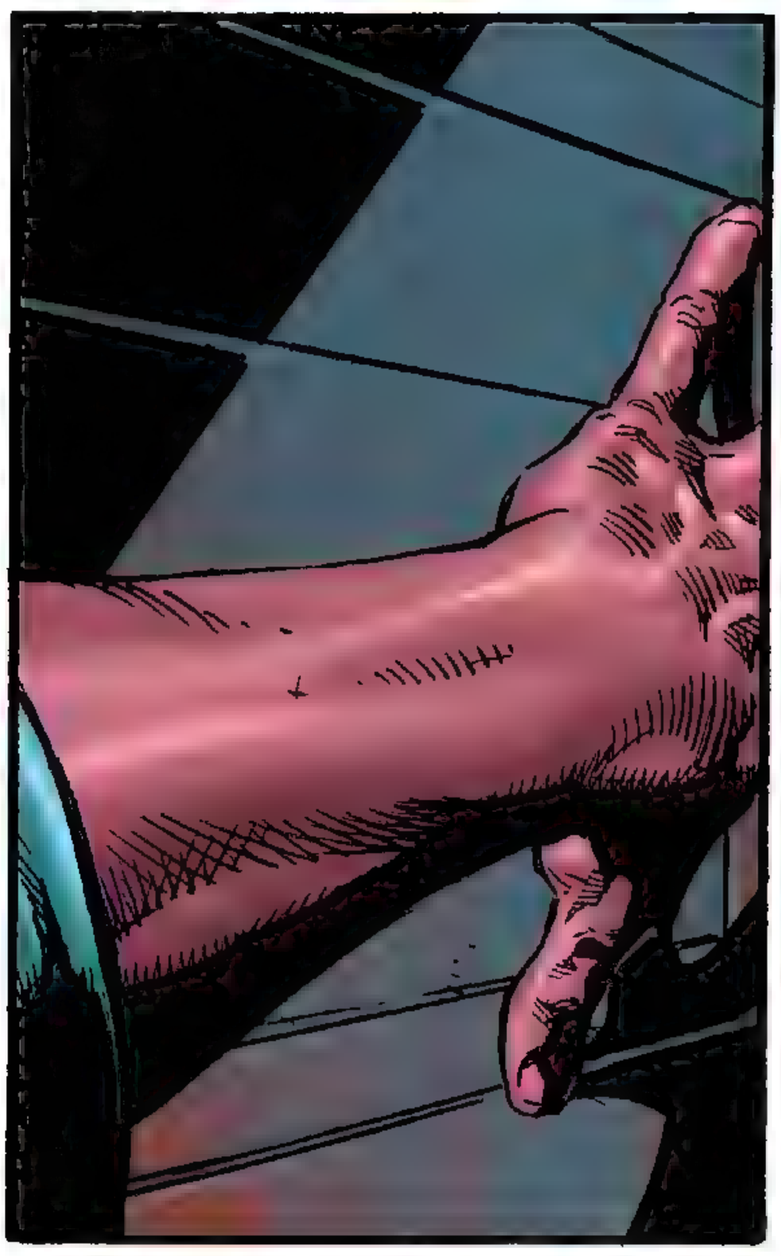
AOWW!

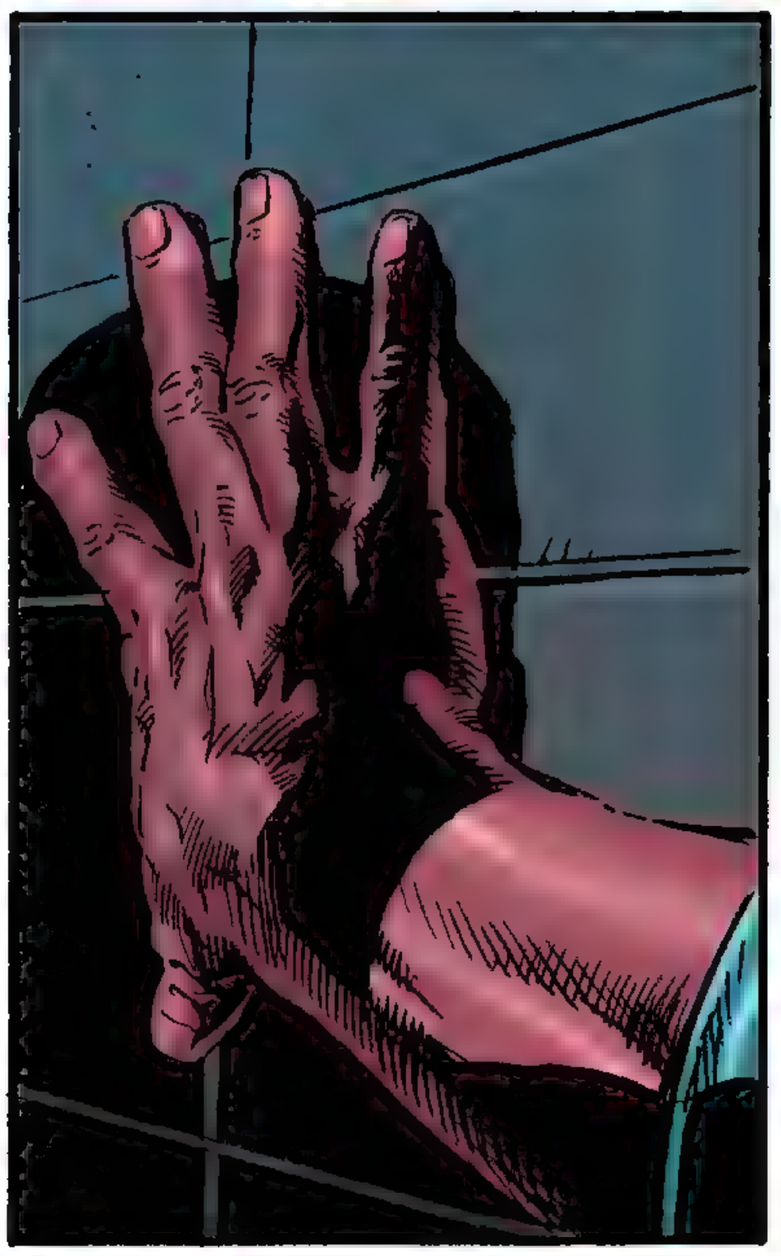
GUHH

BEAT YOU-- NORMAN--

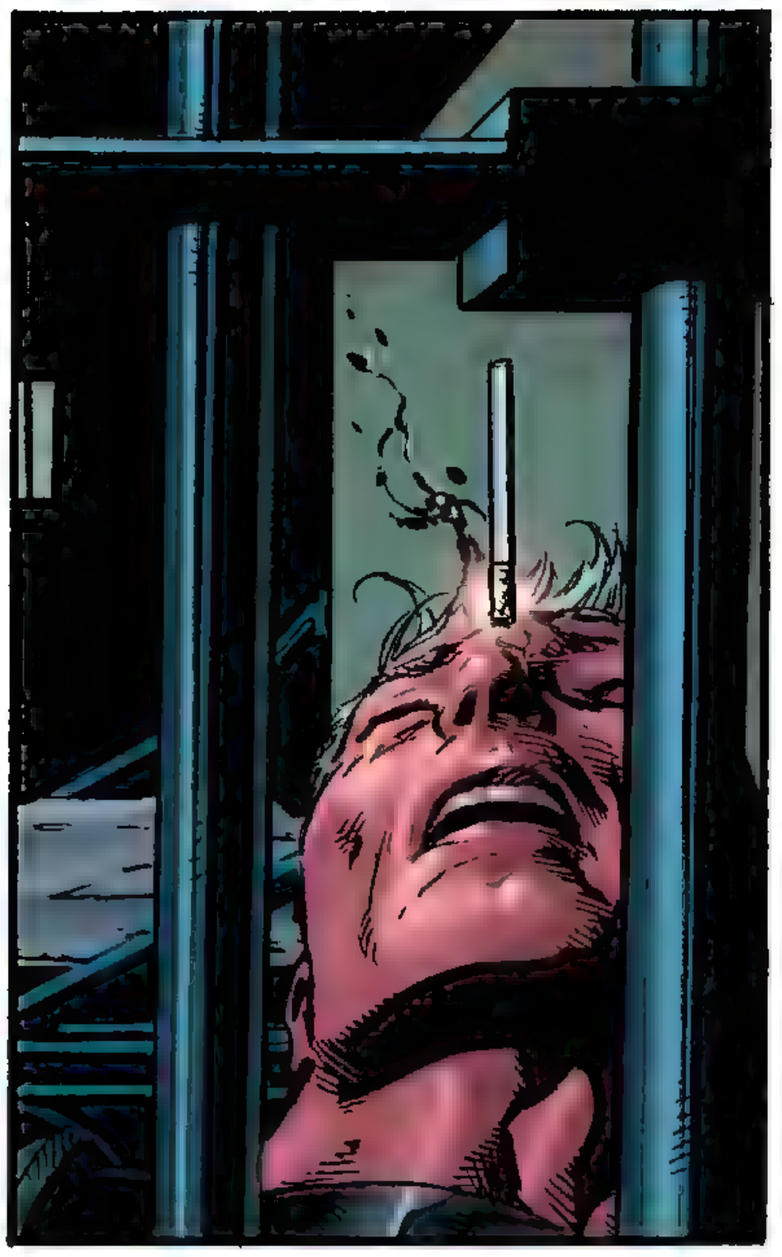
OH GOD, THAT HURTS...







WHAT?



NOT BAD.

=COUGH=

SORRY. SORE THROAT.

THE THING ABOUT NANOMECHANICAL SURGERY, THEY TELL ME, IS THAT IT'S REALLY FAST.

DRAIN ME OUT, PUMP ME NINE PINTS FULL OF BLOOD SUBSTITUTE CRACKLING WITH TINY MACHINES, AND GO AND MAKE A COFFEE.

OR GO NUTS AND RUN AROUND SCREAMING WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT, I GUESS.

THERE WAS NO ONE AROUND WHEN I WOKE UP.

SO I THOUGHT I'D COME DOWN TO THE HOLDING CELLS WHILE EVERYONE WAS BUSY.

GET SOME TARGET PRACTICE IN.

SEE IF I'VE LOST ANY EDGE, YOU KNOW?

DAMN. THAT ONE WAS LOW.

WHY CAN'T I GET INTO YOUR MIND?

NO IDEA. MAYBE BECAUSE MY BRAIN IS FULL OF LITTLE METAL NANOMACHINES RIGHT NOW?

OR MAYBE BECAUSE I'M BULLSEYE AND YOU'RE JUST A BREATHING TARGET.

AH, YEAH. THAT'S BETTER.

FOR A SECOND THERE I WAS AFRAID I'D BE SPENDING THE REST OF MY LIFE AIMING FOR THE HEAD AND HITTING PEOPLE IN THE ASS.

48 HOURS LATER

WEIRD COUPLE OF DAYS, HUH?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY, ROBBIE.

YEAH, I DO, DOC.

NO, YOU REALLY *DON'T*. I CAN GET YOU RELEASED INTO MY CARE, WE CAN PUT YOU INTO MORE INTENSE THERAPY, AND WE CAN FIX UP YOUR CARD SO YOU CAN WORK IF YOU WANT.

DON'T UNDO THE WORK WE'VE DONE HERE, ROBBIE.

YOU SAID IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ANYONE.

THING IS, THAT AIN'T THE POINT. THE POINT *IS*, IT HAPPENED TO ME. AND I NEED TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO MAKE THAT RIGHT.

NOT HERE.

YEAH, HERE.

SEE, DOC, HERE IS WHERE THINGS ARE MOST WRONG. SO HERE'S WHERE I MAKE THINGS RIGHT.

HERE'S WHERE I DO MY PENANCE NOW.

...YES, SIR. THE PSYCHICS PRESUMABLY OVERWHELMED OUR VERY DETAILED SECURITY AND SCREENING PROCEDURES, TOO.

I MEAN, TWO DOZEN PEOPLE CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN THE GREEN GOBLIN INSIDE OUR BASE. OBVIOUSLY, NO REPORT FOLLOWING THE INTERNMENT OF THE FIRST PSYCHIC CAN BE RELIED UPON.

THE *GREEN GOBLIN*, SIR. YES.

BIZARRE! MY WORD EXACTLY! UTTERLY ABSURD, HA HA... HA...

THE HALLUCINATION AFFECTED THE ENTIRE COMPLEMENT OF THUNDERBOLTS MOUNTAIN, OF COURSE, AND --

-- YES, THE REPORT, OF COURSE, SORRY. THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.

YOU UTTER CHIMP. MAY YOU BE THE LAST OF THESE IDIOT PHONE CONVERSATIONS I HAVE TO LIVE THROUGH TODAY.

NORMAN.

AND YOU WILL CALL ME MR. OSBORN OR DIRECTOR OR, IF YOU CANNOT SUMMON THE ENERGY FOR THAT MANY SYLLABLES, SIR WILL DO.

I DON'T THINK SO, NORMAN.

THE DOCTORS SAY IT'LL TAKE A COUPLE OF WEEKS TO STABILIZE MOONSTONE ENOUGH FOR A NANOSURGERY.

GARGAN'S FREAKING OUT BECAUSE THE SYMBIOTE'S FILLING IN BITS OF HIM.

SWORDSMAN?

STANDING IN THE CORNER OF HIS HOSPITAL ROOM, ROCKING COMPULSIVELY AND TALKING TO HIS INVISIBLE SISTER.

YOU REALLY DID A NUMBER ON HIM, NORMAN.

THIS IS THE SWORDSMAN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. GETTING THE WRONG CEREAL AT BREAKFAST COULD HAVE THROWN HIM INTO A PSYCHOTIC BREAK AT ANY TIME AND YOU KNOW IT.

SO WHAT ABOUT YOU, NORMAN?

ME? I'M GOOD. THERE'S TALK OF PROMOTION, IN FACT.

MY PRESCIENCE IN PLACING BULLSEYE ON THE TEAM SAVED EVERYONE AND THWARTED A DASTARDLY SUPER-TERRORIST ATTACK ON A FEDERAL FACILITY.

I'M A HERO.

YOU PUT ON YOUR OLD COSTUME, MUTILATED SEVERAL PEOPLE AND KILLED AT LEAST A DOZEN MORE. AND YOU'RE TRUSTING TO THE MIND CONTROL EFFECT TO COVER YOUR TRACKS.

THE SECURITY CAMERAS WERE STILL RUNNING, YOU KNOW.

QUITE A LOT OF VIDEO WAS DUMPED TO DISKS. THE DISKS, BY THE WAY, AREN'T HERE ANY MORE.

SECURITY IN THAT PLACE REALLY DOES SUCK.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, SONGBIRD?

PERMANENT COMMAND OF THE TEAM. INPUT INTO MISSION SELECTION. VETO ON NEW TEAM MEMBERS.

AND I WANT THE THUNDERBOLTS TO DO SEARCH AND RESCUE WORK WHEN WE'RE NOT ON CAPTURE MISSIONS.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

YOU ARE INSANE. YOU EARN YOURSELF A GET OUT OF JAIL FREE CARD, AND YOU USE IT TO OBTAIN A BETTER CELL.

I AGREE TO YOUR TERMS, SONGBIRD.

ONE MORE THING.

I SPOKE TO BULLSEYE YESTERDAY.

HE SAID THAT, BEFORE HE WAS SHOCKED INTO PARALYSIS ON THE ARIZONA MISSION, SOMEONE TOLD HIM HIS NANOCHAIN WAS OFF AND HE WAS FREE.

LIED TO HIM, TO GET HIM INJURED OR KILLED.

YOU MIGHT SAY A LITTLE *BIRD* TOLD HIM.

RAP SHEET

Alas and alack, faithful T-Bolts readers, 'tis with a heavy heart that we bid a fond farewell to Ms. Molly Lazer as she embarks from Marvel to continue her education. To give her a proper send-off in the Merry Marvel Manner, our all-star creative team has emerged from whatever dark, depraved crevice they call home to wish her well. Here's what they had to say...

Molly, I'm sorry I did all those terrible things to you. You didn't deserve it, and I should not have worn the Green Goblin mask. You were nothing but kind to me during the production of these twelve issues of THUNDERBOLTS, and that's all I was trying to tell you when I followed you home all those times. Best of luck in your return to academe, and I hope the therapy helps.

Please send me your new address.

-- Warren Ellis

Damn -- that's what I was gonna say!

-- Albert Deschesne

Molly, please take me with you. These new editors, they turn green and grow ears and have weird chins. And then they feed me stuff :(

-- Rain Beredo

Molly Lazer not only has the coolest name in comics (or, now that I think about it, THE WORLD), she's a delight to work with--incredibly nice and professional and dedicated to putting out the best books possible. I'll always be grateful to her for giving me the opportunity to write the Thunderbolts. Given all that, I had high hopes that the Thunderbolts program would rehabilitate Molly's criminal tendencies, but then I saw the picture of her attacking her co-workers with daggers. Upon reflection, perhaps the Ivy League is a better setting for her continued therapy. Good luck, Molly...we'll miss you!

-- Christos Gage

I'm not good with words, so...see above!

--Mike Deodato, Jr.

Echoing Christos' sentiments, Molly, you will most definitely be missed around the House of Ideas! Best of luck to you!

And now, prepare thyself, Faithful Reader! With next issue we're bringing the Mountain down -- literally! The Secret Invasion hits the Thunderbolts in full force with the new creative team of Christos Gage & Fernando Blanco taking the reins to the Goblin's--er--Norman's group of misanthropic menaces!

See ya in thirty!

--Lauren Sankovitch

NEXT ISSUE:

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